WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT HERSHEY By Tom Humphrie

NEW MASSES

APRIL 20, 1937 FIFTEEN CENTS A COPY

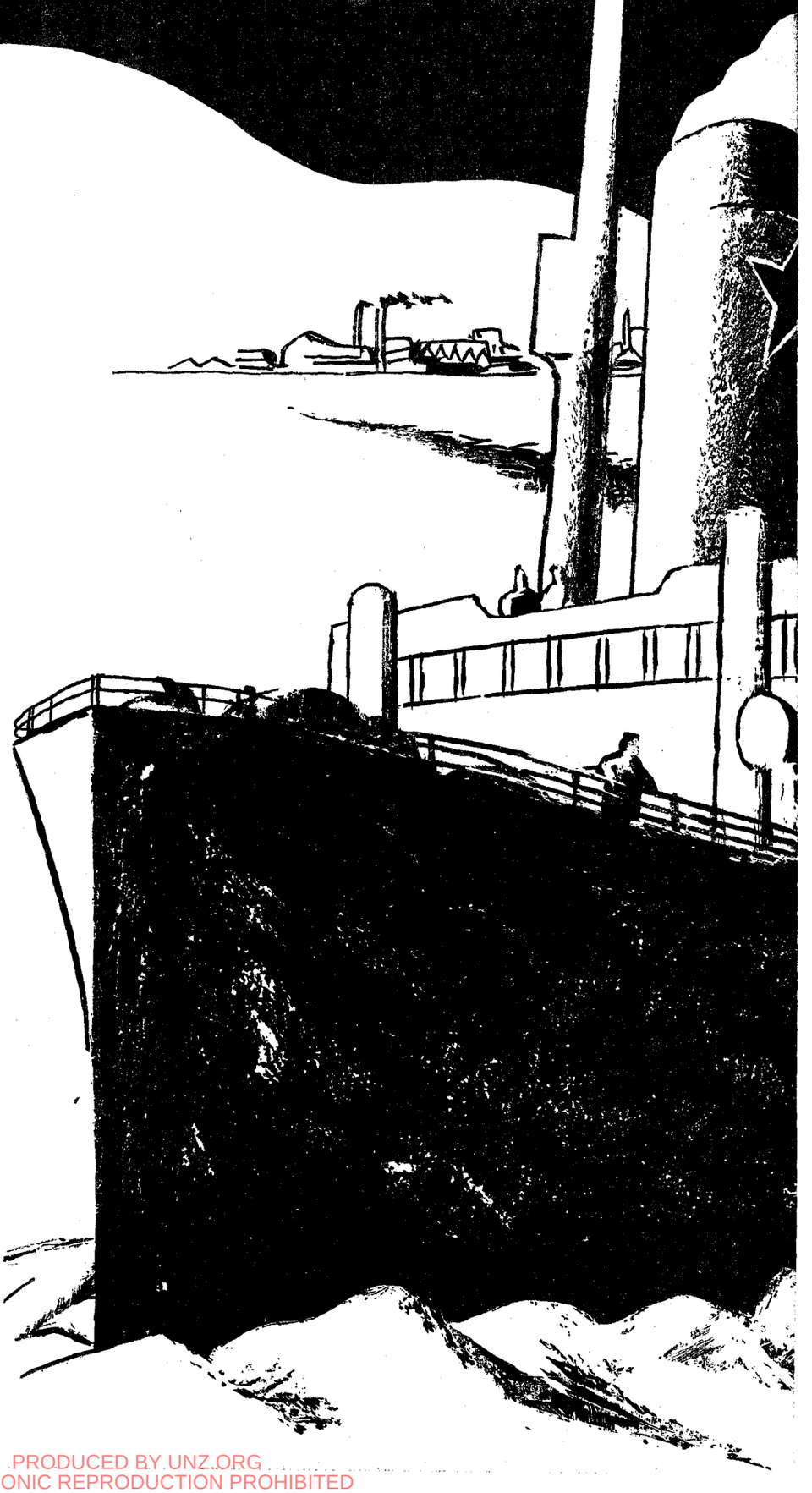
PETER FREUCHEN
I Am Going to the Soviet Arctic

The Secret Socialist Convention
By a Delegate

With the Lincoln Battalion
A Letter from the Front

The Meaning of the Sit-Down
By Matthew Josephson

The People's Front in China and Spain
By Hu Chow-yuan and Ramón Sender



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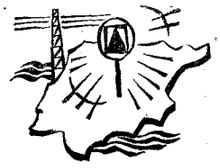
BETWEEN OURSELVES

RADIO waves continue to pound our eardrums with special intent. Monday, Herbert Kline, our Madrid correspondent, cabled us that Professor J. B. S. Haldane, renowned British scientist and author of *Daedalus* and *Possible Worlds,* would speak to us via Madrid's short-wave Station EAQ2 (9.5 megacycles). We listened, and Professor



Haldane had some hot things to say about the Spanish policy of the British government and some warm things to say about the American Abraham Lincoln Battalion, which has been in the thick of recent fighting. We will print Professor Haldane's message to America next week.

And speaking of the Lincoln Battalion, we wish our readers everywhere would send on to us letters sent home by American volunteers fighting for the loyalist cause. The best plan is not to send originals, but copies typed double-space on one side of the paper.

And at the same time, there's another matter concerning the Lincoln Battalion. Many readers and friends of Spanish democracy are wondering what they can send to the American anti-fascist fighters. Well, one thing which is badly wanted at the front, as well as in the base hospitals, are copies of the NEW MASSES. One letter says: "None of our boys have seen a single copy of it since we left the states, and we are hungry and anxious to see our old friend again." Won't our readers make it possible for us to send the magazine to the boys in the Lincoln Battalion? We have set up a special fund for this purpose. Address your contributions to Lincoln Battalion Magazine Fund, at our offices.

Our people's-front series will be postponed a week to allow the German commentators to cover recent anti-Hitler activity.

What's What

SIMULTANEOUS art exhibitions in eight American cities will be in progress this week under the auspices of the American Artists' Congress. The painting by Tschacbasov reproduced on page 22 is included in the New York district first national membership exhibition which opens Saturday, April 17, in the International Building at Rockefeller Center. Members of the organization's regional branches are conducting simultaneous shows in the key cities of their respective sections: Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, Portland, Ore., Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Detroit.

Contributor Phil Bard, former president of the Artists' Union, recently returned from Spain, will present a fully equipped field ambulance (with driver) to a representative of the Spanish government at a mass meeting under the auspices of the North American Committee for the Aid of Spanish Democracy, to be held at the Hippodrome New York at 2:30 p.m., April 18. T funds for the ambulance were rai by the Artists' Union. Speakers will clude Ambassador de los Rios, Bisl Francis J. McConnell, Chet La More of the Artists' Union, and others.

Who's Who

PETER FREUCHEN, famed arctic explorer and author of best-seller *Eskimo,* was for many years governor of Greenland. Recently returned from a jaunt in Nazi Germany, he has written for NEW MASSES readers some of his experiences with the native chieftains of these dark regions. They will appear in an early issue. . . . Ramón Sender, Spanish novelist, is the author of the widely acclaimed *Seven Red Sundays.* His analysis of the Frente Popular was written while he served on the front lines in the loyalist army. . . . Hu Chow-yuan is a Chinese writer and liberal philosopher, and formerly a professor at the National Chi-nan University in Shanghai. He was the political chief of the Nineteenth Route Army and the chairman of the cultural department of the short-lived People's Government in Fukien. After attending the Brussels Peace Conference, he is visiting this country. . . . Matthew Josephson is the author of *The Robber Barons* and a frequent contributor to the *Nation* and *New Republic.* . . . Sidney Hill is an architect and housing expert. He has contributed to the NEW MASSES on his subject before. . . . Horace Gregory is the author of two books of poems, *Chelsea Rooming House* and *Chorus for Survival,* and is now preparing for publication a volume of literary criticism called *Makers and Ancestors.* He is also editing, at the behest of publisher Norton, *New Letters,* a semi-annual anthology devoted to a "new trend" in literature and criticism. . . . Howard Bronson is the pseudonym of a delegate to the recent Socialist party convention. . . . Tom Humphries wrote "Fantastic, Is It Not?"—about Philadelphia's young social set, which appeared in a recent issue of NEW MASSES. . . . Herbert Kline, our correspondent in Madrid, speaks over Spain's powerful short-wave radio station, EAQ2, every week. . . . Norman Rosten, twenty-three-year-old Brooklyn College graduate, declares: "I am writing less than two years. This is my first long poem and I wonder if it's good or not." He is the winner of the playwriting scholarship awarded by the Dramatists' Guild, and is now at Michigan University working on his scholarship play, a poetic drama based on the Haymarket affair. . . . Kenneth Rexroth lives in San Francisco, where he edits a new "little"-magazine, the *Coast.* He has written for the *New Republic, Partisan Review,* and many other publications. . . . Among the book reviewers, Jack Conroy is known as the author of *The Disinherited* and *A World to Win,* and as editor of *Anvil.* . . . William Phillips, formerly editor of the *Partisan Review,* is co-author with Philip Rahv of a critical essay on the theater which will be published in the first edition of Horace Gregory's anthology. . . . William Gropper, who has Mussolini flying his true colors on page 10, will do a three-panel mural in the new Department of the Interior Building in Washington, D. C. . . . A reader writes in complaining about Joe Bartlett's (see p. 11) caricature of John L. Lewis that served as the headpiece for the start of our recent Lewis series. The caricature was terrible, says our correspondent. Well, we got another letter about it. This was from the secretary of a reader who liked it, asking whether he might have the original. His name is John L. Lewis.

Flashbacks

"THESE are men of extraordinary intelligence," said New York's District Attorney of the editors of the *Masses,* who went on trial April 15, 1918, charged with anti-war activities. "I confidently expect you," he continued, "to bring in a verdict of guilty." The jury, granting his premise, suspected his conclusion of being *non sequitur,* disagreed. . . . Poet George Gordon, Lord Byron, rebel scion of British aristocracy, died April 19, 1824, while in Greece helping that country's struggle for freedom. "My wealth, my abilities, I devoted to her cause," said this alien libertarian. . . . An ardent young organizer galloped all night April 18, 1775, announcing from his saddle that the British were marching to seize powder stored by American farmers. Next day into the ranks of the Minute Men whom Paul Revere had summoned, the British fired the shot heard round the world. . . . Into the tents housing families of striking miners, Colorado militia, on April 20, 1914, fired another shot which echoed widely. It killed eleven children, two women, six men at Ludlow, who had been evicted by Rockefeller.

THIS WEEK

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NEW MASSES

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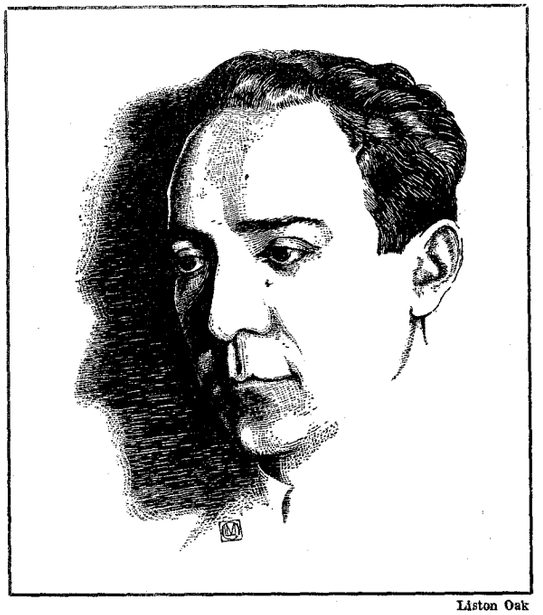

Liston Oak

Ramón Sender

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN SPAIN

Our Front Is Solid

The natural contour of existing social relations in Spain fitted in so well with the Frente Popular that the fascists had no hope but force

By Ramón Sender

FOR six years Spain has been a republic. During the first two, the republican parties sought to carry out a democratic revolution; but they failed because the old order was too strongly entrenched and the republican petty bourgeoisie hesitated to enlist the assistance of the proletarian parties which could have assured a victory. Isolated between the interests of feudalism and the interests of the workers, the republican bourgeoisie failed, retreating before the C.E.D.A. (the Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right Parties, the fascist coalition headed by José Maria Gil Robles), the Agrarian Party, and the Radical Party of Lerroux. These Right groups assumed power with the sole aim of preventing the completion of the democratic revolution. The reactionaries did not succeed. For they clashed with historical currents which coincided with the interests of the vast strata of society directly identified with the revolution. To halt that revolution, they did not stop even at medieval methods of terror. As a result, the republican parties, hounded with fire and sword by the church, the large landowners, the grandees, and the monarchists—with the tacit consent of the military caste—woke up to a realization of their true position.

BY THEMSELVES, however, the republicans might not have succeeded in meeting the situation if the Communist Party had not brought forward the proposal of the popular front. The proposal, frankly, was a brave one, considering the radical temper of the masses, among whom everything extreme was finding a ready response. In the beginning, perhaps, the Communist Party may have had to overcome a certain ingrained reluctance in approaching the middle-class parties. Yet by approaching them, the Communist Party was loyal to its traditions, for time and time again it had pointed out that in Spain the democratic revolution would be accomplished by the workers and peasants. The party's slogan of people's front was a logical outgrowth, and practically all of us saw it in that light.

The republican parties, led by Azaña and strictly isolated from the feudal elements as well as from big business and the church, saw things in the same light. The triumph of the Frente Popular on February 16 of last year was the consecration of that viewpoint. The Left bourgeoisie was not strong enough to achieve the democratic revolution in 1931-2-3. In the years that followed, the Right bourgeoisie did not have enough support to stop it. The crossroads of history were plainly marked. With the close coöperation of the workers and peasants, whose parties did their loyal best, the democratic revolution was practically an accomplished fact when the civil war broke out.

More than anything else, the Frente Popular in Spain served to demarcate the lines of battle, hitherto rather vague. The demarcation of those lines involved great danger for international fascism, for it meant an array of forces which, by the very logic of their historic cogency, assumed added breadth and strategic power. Fascism moves in a straight line, to the rigidity of which reality must be accommodated. Reality must thus be coaxed and revised and whipped into an artificial shape by the artifices of sophistry, mendacious propaganda, and outright trickery. After this is done, fascism seals the face of reality with the stamp of its tight and narrow snap appraisals. Its outlook is one-dimensional, lim-

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ited; but when it finds fallow fields for cultivation or battle, it stands a chance of winning.

As AGAINST such unrealities, the Communist Party offered the idea of the people's front, which corresponded marvelously with the palpable facts of Spain's social set-up. It was the direct, irrevocable answer in terms of historic reality. At once fascism discerned struggle in a field in which its best weapons were of no avail. The fascists have always said, "fascist dictatorship versus proletarian dictatorship." The realities of Spain, with roots which run deep in our revolutionary tradition, from the "Comuneros" of Castilla to the revolt of Fermín Galán, pointed elsewhere: "fascism versus democracy." This password, the truth of which becomes clearer every day, brought into our ranks large social segments, and even gained the expressed sympathy of certain advanced capitalist groups which have thrown in their lot with us despite the lead which the workers and peasants have taken throughout the civil war. The facts themselves have ruthlessly showed up the falseness and the weakness of fascist politics. Yes, weakness. Because the fascists are the very first to understand and indirectly to admit that as against the rounded, complete, one might say architectonic fabric of Spain's Frente Popular which triumphed on February 16, 1936, their bald, straight-lined designs are as nothing. Only with machine guns could they hope to prevail. The immediate triumph in arms of the Spanish republic's forces which was expected and about to be realized would have been a mortal blow to Hitler and Mussolini. The liberal sections of Germany and Italy, which now bear up as best they can under the heel of fascism, would have discovered that the monster had mere feet of clay. The worker and peasant elements of Italy and Germany would have had a lesson brought home to them and the anti-fascist movement would have consolidated and expanded. Germany and Italy saw this quite clearly. They provided Franco with the best of available materials, army instructors, technicians, and combat troops in great numbers. This complicated the struggle and rendered our triumphs more difficult. But we all know that in aiding Franco, Hitler and Mussolini have only created problems for themselves at home.

THE REALITIES of the Spanish Frente Popular —such is the force of its validity and its justice—have penetrated to the hearts of every enslaved people. Nor, on the other hand, have gag methods been able to keep certain other truths from seeping over the borders, the truths which Heinrich Mann has told of Germany, and Nicoletti of Italy.

For me, the People's Front of Spain, as I have already said, has represented the first draft of that architectonic vision which in art, in politics, and in war throws its light in the direction of victory. Such was the vision of the Russian Bolshevik Party. Such, earlier, was the vision of the French encyclopædists—and, before them, of the great reformers whose

Puyol

Forward on the Offensive!

interests appeared to be limited only to religious matters. The sterile, cynical distortions of fascism cannot survive in the glow of that light.

The first thing which the Spanish People's Front proceeded to do was precisely to "consolidate and consecrate" large sections of the petty bourgeoisie and working-class parties and a large part of the working class generally to the historic reality, to the historic necessity, which we now stand up faithfully to defend arms in hand.

THE confused makeshifts of the Spanish fascists, their terrorism, the thousands of acts of monstrous class vengeance which they continue to perpetrate, have not blurred our vision nor distorted our perspective. We know exactly what we think, exactly what we want. We know that the constant, bloody struggle of the Spanish people throughout the nineteenth century to exert its will has not been in vain, despite the fact that confusion of alignments and fronts has added immeasurably to their sacrifices. We know, too, that the republican petty bourgeoisie, which in 1873 massacred masses of peasants and workers in the name of the very principles which those masses were defending, now knows better, and in the crucible of the People's Front is learning to fuse its truly liberal and progressive idealism in the struggles of Spanish workers and peasants for liberty. Rubbing elbows in the People's Front, facing dramatic experiences in common, these petty-bourgeois groups, who have no footing in feudalistic Spain, who distrust an alliance, always dubious, with the big-money power, have lined up with us, learning in their contact with the workers the great lesson which mere theory and isolated reflection might never have taught them. They now take their places with us to obtain the most advanced solution possible within the framework of a democracy. The People's Front of Spain is bringing it to pass that feudalism, the money power, and the church, shall drown out their own special privilege in the blood which they have chosen to spill.

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THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN CHINA

Anti-Japanese Unity Is the Basis

The political chief of the Nineteenth Route Army says that rescuing the nation from annihilation appeals to all strata

By Hu Chow-yuan

CHINA today is faced with an unprecedented national crisis. Japanese aggression has become the life-and-death problem to the 450,000,000 people of China whose peaceful civilization permitted them to survive for fifty centuries. But a great movement is growing in China: the United Anti-Japanese Front. This movement aims at the national salvation of China as well as peace in the Pacific, and hence the peace of the world.

This movement is not generally called the "people's front" in China, but rather the "united front," "all-people's front," "anti-Japanese front," or "national-salvation front." Recently, the term "United Anti-Japanese Front" has been very widely used.

The United Anti-Japanese Front movement is the natural answer of the Chinese people to the ruthless aggression of Japanese imperialism. Japanese imperialism, with its decadent social and economic structure, is at once the most backward and the most aggressive in the world. As long as Japan remains a non-democratic, military-fascist, bureaucratic power, Japan is bound to push its invasion of China as savagely as possible. Japan has been seizing Chinese territory, province after province, undermining Chinese sovereignty and shattering Chinese territorial integrity. Japanese smuggling, protected by arms, and the forced reduction of the Chinese custom tariff on Japanese goods, are ruining Chinese national economy. Through the pro-Japanese traitors in China, Japan is trampling upon the freedom of speech and assembly of the Chinese people. This aggression threatens no one class alone, but the Chinese nation as a whole. Chinese peasants, workers, petty bourgeoisie, as well as capitalists and landowners, are all suffering under the heel of Japanese imperialism. It becomes imperative for all Chinese people regardless of parties and classes to unite against this common aggressor.

The united front is not a new thing in China. From 1924 to 1927, through the cooperation between the Kuomintang [Nationalist Party] and the Communist Party, there arose a strong united front which swept away the northern militarist regime and temporarily checked imperialist aggression. When this unity was betrayed, Japan began her attack upon China in the 1928 "Tsinan adventure." Today the united front aims at achieving a much wider unity than ever before, embracing all anti-Japanese forces. Again, collaboration between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party is the key problem of the movement.

After Japan's invasion of Manchuria in September 1931, though the Nanking government continued to adopt a so-called "non-resistance" policy, the anti-Japanese struggle, on a small scale, never ceased. Today in Manchuria there exists a People's Volunteer Army, more than 150,000 strong, with thousands of guerrilla raids against the invaders to its credit. The first energetic resistance was the world-famous Shanghai defense by the Nineteenth Route Army in the spring of 1932. During this heroic defense, although all the patriotic parties and groups, including the Communist Party of China, unanimously supported the Nineteenth Route Army, there was not as yet created a concrete united front. The first concerted drive in the direction came with the establishment of the People's Government in Fukien by the Nineteenth Route Army and the conclusion of an "anti-Japan, anti-traitor" agreement with the Chinese Communists in 1933. The issuance of an "anti-Japanese program" advocating armed self-defense, by Mme. Sun Yat-sen and other patriotic leaders, provided ideological inspiration to the united front. A vigorous, nation-wide United Anti-Japanese Front movement arose in 1935, when Japan attempted to separate the five northern provinces from China under camouflage of the notorious "autonomy movement." In August 1935, the Chinese Communist Party announced its new policy of directing all efforts against Japan, advocating the establishment of a "national-defense government" and a "united anti-Japanese army." At the same time, the Nineteenth Route Army organized the National-Revolution League, and called upon the Chinese people to unite against Japan. The Chinese students, always the vanguard of the Chinese independence movement, deepened and widened this movement throughout China. In the summer of 1936, further impetus was given this movement with the formation of the All-China Federation of the National Salvation Associations as a central mass organization for the united-front movement. The People's Volunteer Army in Manchuria, in combat against the invaders under extremely difficult conditions, is, needless to say, the most heroic supporter of this movement. This movement is growing stronger and stronger. It receives not only sympathy and support from the Chinese people at home and abroad, but also from many Nanking leaders and forces as well as Chang Hsueh-liang's former troops in Shensi. Unfortunately, despite the burning hope of Chinese people for national resistance against Japan together with the cessation of civil war, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, surrounded by the pro-Japanese politicians, has not yet broken with the policy of "internal pacification before resistance against the foreign enemy."

THE Sian kidnaping of Chiang Kai-shek is an example of the deep influence which the United Anti-Japanese Front exerts among official forces in China. The reason for this event is not international or personal intrigue, but rather the conflict between the people's will and Chiang Kai-shek's past policy. This was no kidnaping in the ordinary sense, for there was no ransom demanded, but rather a change of policy for the benefit of the whole nation.

Japanese imperialism and the pro-Japanese politicians, such as Wang Ching-wei, Ho Ying-ching, Wu Ting-chang, and others, attempted to seize the Sian event as an opportunity for instigating a large-scale civil war. But the United Anti-Japanese Front again showed its strength by bringing this episode to a peaceful close. According to the latest news, General Chiang was released when he agreed with the proposals of the Sian leaders.

John Mackey
Diplomat

But will the Nanking government change its policy toward Japan? Will the civil war in China be stopped once for ever? For the time being, there is no definite sign of such an eventuality. But one thing is certain, namely, that it will be much more difficult than ever before for the Nanking government to continue its old policy.

Today, although there is still a strong pro-Japanese clique in the Nanking government, and although General Chiang is still suspicious of and hostile to the United Anti-Japanese Front, nevertheless, there has arisen a group of anti-Japanese leaders in Nanking, such as Dr. T. V. Soong, Marshal Feng Yu-siang, and others.

The motto of the United Anti-Japanese Front is: *Armed defense against Japanese invaders; national unity for independence and*

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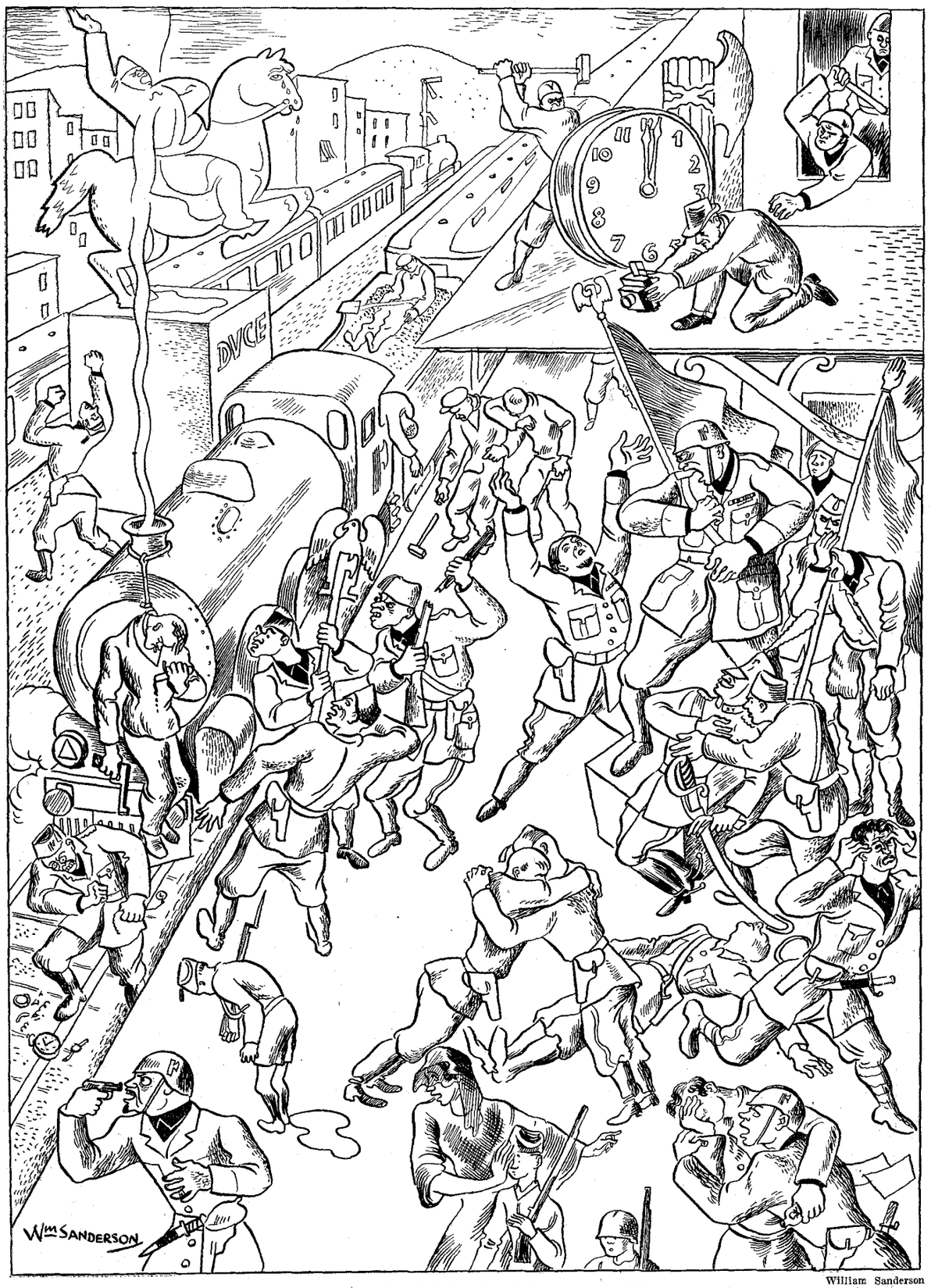
peace. The general principles may be summarized in the following points: (1) no fratricidal war; unity of all national forces against Japanese aggression; (2) release of the "patriotic prisoners"; guarantee of civil rights such as freedom of speech and assembly; (3) suppression of Japanese smuggling; boycott of Japanese goods; famine relief; promotion of national economy; and betterment of the living standards of the peasants, workers, and other employees; (4) closer coöperation with the democratic powers friendly to Chinese independence; (5) convening of a national salvation assembly with all parties and organizations, including the Communists, represented; (6) reorganization of the Nanking government by eliminating the pro-Japanese elements.

The first and foremost problem facing the Chinese people is to rescue its national existence from Japanese annihilation. This is no narrow nationalistic or anti-foreign movement. Its aim is to achieve the independence of China as a nation. While we cannot compromise with Japanese invaders, we are by no means hostile to the Japanese people, who are also oppressed by the weight of Japanese imperialism.

This is not merely a "left," a Socialist, or a Communist movement. Without first achieving Chinese national freedom, neither capitalism nor socialism is possible in China. It is not a partisan or a fractional movement, nor a movement against the Nanking government or Chiang Kai-shek.

In order to resist Japan, all Chinese should unite. It is our aim to unify all the Chinese people, from General Chiang to the Communists, for the common cause: "resist Japan — save China."

As long as Japanese aggression has not withdrawn from China, including Manchuria, it will have to be met by a strong resistance of a united China. During the Shanghai defense, the Nineteenth Route Army successfully resisted Japanese invaders with 45,000 Chinese fighting 90,000 Japanese. If a united China mobilizes her 2,500,000 soldiers, backed up by the 450,000,000 people, we are sure that we will be the final victors.



William Sanderson

MODERN POLITICAL CONTRETEMPS

The Rome Express arrives two minutes late

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What Really Happened at Hershey

Behind the fancy facade of the "model" town were things that caused the strike and the recent riot

By Tom Humphries

HERSHEY, PA.—Long considered the answer to the American workers' prayer, Hershey is unique among company towns. Its spotless streets, shaded lawns, and model homes have for years elicited admiring ohs and ahs from naïve tourists. It has a luxurious community center, four golf courses, an Indian museum, and an amusement park. There is a zoo—the biggest privately owned zoo in the world—in which the monkey cages are cooled in summer by electric fans. There is a dance pavilion in which no less a maestro than Rudy Vallée has played. Note, too, the opulent Hershey Hotel with flower-scented lobby and pseudo-Moorish decorations. The chocolate "dream town" also boasts a sports arena which is the largest monolithic concrete structure in the U.S.A. And the company's office building is ultra modern, vast stretches of glass, indirect lighting, splendid ventilation.

All these wonders of the twentieth century have served to nourish the myth that Chocolate King Milton Hershey is a great benefactor to his community and his employees. More than that: he is considered a great benefactor to the entire state of Pennsylvania. The Hershey Industrial School, which owns most of the stock in the chocolate factory, provides free education and housing to 800 orphan boys from various parts of the state.

The chocolate workers, however, have usually seen through the lovely fabric of legend which publicity agents have woven around this semi-feudal domain in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. They are quick to point out the advertising value of the "model town" hokum.

MR. HERSHEY never advertises through the medium of newspaper ads, radio programs, or billboards. More subtle is the way he publicizes his chocolate bars and cocoa through the activities of Henry ("Hershey Hurricane") Picard, the Hershey golf professional who plays in the national tournaments and carries off numerous prizes every year. Equally valuable as a publicity medium are the Hershey Bears Hockey Team—most sports writers oblige by the leaving the "e" out of "Bears"—which has just won the championship of the Eastern Amateur Hockey League. Recently, the Bears were suspended from the Amateur Athletic Union on the ground of professionalism. Hershey's players are mostly Canadians, imported to Hershey to play hockey and given purely formal employment in the town to create amateur standing for them.

The best advertising for the chocolate products, however, has been the town of Hershey itself. Every year hundreds of thousands of tourists attend the hockey games, visit the factory, idle through the biggest privately owned zoo in the world. What they see is enhanced a thousand-fold in romantic glamour by feature stories in the newspapers and magazines which make the reader wish he lived in the paradise that is Hershey.

But of Hershey's unique attractions, the hockey games alone are of any interest to the employees of the chocolate plant. Obviously, company officials and foremen are the only ones in the factory who can afford to use the golf courses or attend the Rudy Vallée dances. And even among company officials there are few who can afford the luxuries of the six-dollars-a-day Hershey Hotel, which caters chiefly to central Pennsylvania's extreme upper crust. The Community Center, on the other hand, charges the usual Y.M.C.A. prices, but provides little more in the way of facilities. As for the famous zoo, the workers wish their own homes were as nicely laid out as the air-cooled monkey cages.

The fact is, Hershey workers share the dream of the great uninformed public. They, too, would like to live in Hershey. Actually, the rentals of the homes lining the town's snow-white pavements are so prohibitive that the overwhelming majority of the workers live outside of this alleged proletarian paradise in utterly uncelebrated towns like Swatra, Palmyra, and Hummelstown.

The industrial school for orphan boys seems to be good, but its real position in the Hershey set-up has seldom been completely understood. Few people know that many of the orphans graduating at eighteen go to work in the chocolate factory where they earn considerably less than was spent upon them while at school. Furthermore, the company jealously guards the fact that since the industrial school is a philanthropic institution, it secures tax exemptions for all of its property—that is, *for most of the town*. The industrial school, in turn, is controlled by the Hershey Trust Co., where the aged would-be philanthropist Milton Hershey is chairman of the board. Untold are the millions which Hershey saves by this philanthropic system of tax evasion.

Sid Gotcliffe

WITH FACTS such as these but little known, it was not until the C.I.O. came to Hershey that the bubble began to burst. Experienced organizers from the garment trades and the coal mines still wag their heads in astonishment and swear that never in all their lives did they see an organizing campaign so swiftly successful as the C.I.O. drive in Hershey.

Led by red-haired, jolly-faced John Loy and heavy-set Russell Behman, former collegiate and professional football star, the workers held a series of whirlwind meetings. Denied the use of buildings in the chocolate king's vest-pocket utopia, they rented a deserted, run-down schoolhouse in Palmyra, three miles away. This they transformed into union headquarters. Within two weeks they had signed up 1600 of the 2400 employed at the plant.

The story goes that a few days after the signing of the Carnegie-Illinois Steel contract, Behman, Loy, and several others turned up at C.I.O. headquarters in the near-by steel town of Lebanon. Totally inexperienced in union matters, they insisted that they wanted to join the steel workers' union.

The infectious success of the steel campaign, however, would have borne little fruit in Hershey were it not for the unbearable conditions in the chocolate factory. For under the glittering legend there lies a real story of dizzy, back-breaking speed-up, low wages, and a fantastic system of making employees spend ten or eleven hours around the plant in order to piece together eight hours of actual labor.

Within three weeks' time, the union membership increased to 2200, and without a strike forced the company to recognize the United Chocolate Workers as sole bargaining agent. Signed on St. Patrick's Day, the contract provided for a forty-hour, five-day week, guaranteed seniority rights, and confirmed wage increases which the company had granted a few days earlier in a frantic attempt to head off the organizing campaign. Minimum wages were raised from thirty-nine to forty-four cents an hour for women, from forty-eight to sixty cents for men. Openly dissatisfied with the sex differential in pay, the union bided its time. Peace reigned in Hershey for three weeks.

Then the trouble started. You can call it

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"Hershey Bar Sinister" or "Hurricane in Hershey"; the fact is, work has never been steady at the chocolate plant. Every summer sees a slack period of at least two months. This year the corporation started the seasonal layoffs the last week in March, with the obvious purpose of injuring the union. Over 100 workers were laid off in one day, among them many shop stewards and union leaders. Seniority rights were ruthlessly violated.

THE UNION immediately protested. Rebuffed by the corporation on Friday, April 2, the union leaders gave the signal for a sit-down. Within twenty minutes the machinery of the plant stopped completely. Taken aback by this display of strength, and worried by the union's raising the issue of a closed shop, the corporation showed signs of agreeing to abide by the St. Patrick's Day contract.

Accordingly, sit-downers evacuated the plant over the week-end, leaving only a small group behind to hold the fort. On Tuesday they returned. By that time, Hershey's satraps had plainly shown that they had no intention of abiding by the contract. Subsequent events revealed that they were already devising a shockingly vicious method of smashing both the contract and the union.

From the beginning of the strike, murmurs of protest were heard among the 2000 farmers who normally supply Hershey with 800,000 pounds of milk daily. The corporation immediately took advantage of this situation by having its friends among the rich farmers attempt to lead the others into direct conflict with the workers.

The first step was to bring a delegation of farmers to Hershey to ask that some method be found of securing a market for their milk. The union met this demand in a very sensible fashion. It allowed the factory's milk-separating machines to resume activity. The arrangement was that the corporation was to dispose of the cream wherever it could, and that the farmers would try to sell the milk themselves.

As brought out later in the Philadelphia *Record*, this scheme worked out well. Most of the milk was bought by a Philadelphian, in spite of opposition from the Hershey corporation, which apparently sabotaged the sale of cream. In fact, the scheme worked so well that the corporation began to lose support among the farmers. Many of these donated milk to the strikers.

This led to the next step. Stooges of the Hershey corporation began to foment a Red scare among all the forces they could muster. On the morning of April 7—"bloody Wednesday"—a parade of C.I.O. "opponents" was staged in Palmyra. In addition to farmers and a small group of backward workers which the corporation had organized into a "Loyal Workers' Union," hundreds of employees from the various Hershey enterprises outside the chocolate factory were drafted into participating on pain of being fired.

Old Louis Popp and many other Hershey workers quit their jobs rather than take part in an attack on the sit-downers. Others succumbed to pressure.

Crockett Johnson

"No one goes over my head, Withers. Next time you pray to God for a raise, you're fired!"

Evidence published in the Philadelphia *Record* indicates that professional strikebreakers were hired from the Railway Audit & Inspection Co. Also present in the parade were Boy Scouts, American Legion posts with fife-and-drum corps, and business men, all of whom in one way or another had been recipients of Hershey philanthropy. The Landis shoe factory and the Schneider box factory declared a holiday and ordered their employees to take part in the parade. Marchers carried placards attacking the C.I.O. as "C(ommunistic) I(diotic) O(utlaws)."

The Palmyra parade was followed by a meeting in the Hershey sports arena. Inflammatory speeches fanned a spirit of vigilanteism. An ultimatum to leave the factory by one o'clock was sent to the sit-downers. Anxious to preserve peace at any cost, the union agreed to leave the plant. By this time, however, a fever pitch had been reached in the sports arena. Foster Wagner, leader of the mob, was shouting:

"When you go into that factory, don't lose your heads. Be sure you don't hit a friend."

Evacuation of the plant was no longer an issue. The Hershey corporation was intent upon violence. Just as the sit-downers were leaving the plant, the mob attacked them, swinging clubs, blackjacks, whips, and ice-picks. Nonplussed at this treachery, the sit-downers retreated into the plant. The factory superintendent, A. T. Heilman, edged in among them, opened the door from within, and exhorted the rioters to enter.

Unarmed, outnumbered five to one, the sit-downers were clubbed, kicked, forced to run the gauntlet. Teeth were knocked out, lips split open, heads cracked. Knives, flashing wildly, found their mark. Dozens of bystanders were knocked down and beaten. The pavements of Hershey, so beautiful and white, literally ran with blood.

During the riot, County Sheriff W. W. Caldwell obligingly winked one eye. When the attack was nearly over, he decided it was high time to summon the state police. These came dashing into the scene in *opéra-bouffe* style from the training school only four blocks away from the mob assault. They came to preserve the peace after the damage was done, after one of the very few cases where blood had been shed in an American sit-down strike.

THE MYTH of the Hershey "dream town" has vanished into thin air. But from the ashes of the Hershey legend there have sprung up two new legends to take its place. The first, born of a fascist vigilanteism, has already borne fruit. In Bellefonte, Pa., vigilantes burned down C.I.O. headquarters and drove out of town four men who had been picketing peacefully in front of the Tital Metal Works. They carried banners inscribed: "Hershey did it—so can we."

The second legend is less spectacular. It's the legend of once jolly-faced John Loy, his teeth knocked out, swearing to devote his life to union activity; of burly Russell Behman, now a little less burly, organizing a picket line as soon as he recovered from the beating; of 600 laughing workers parading before the chocolate factory and singing "We shall not be moved"—marching through the driving rain that cleansed the streets of Hershey during the days following bloody Wednesday. It's a legend of Pennsylvania small-town folk and farmers' children who started out by wanting to join the steel union and stood up beneath the blows of a mailed fist which until now had been sheathed in a glove of the softest velvet.

It's something that may yet make a genuine "dream town" out of Hershey.

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Wounded in Action

Fascist bullets struck this young American in two places, but he is still able to write his impressions of front-line doings

By a Member of the Lincoln Battalion

DEAR EVERYBODY: Fight against fascism *now!* For the cost in lives, pain, suffering is almost, excepting for the durable working class, unbearable.

Hurrah! Hurrah! The American Battalion has advanced more than half a mile against the best-trained murderers that Hitler fascism could ship to Spain. The American boys have shown their guts, ability, willingness to give their all—and some *have* given their all—to fight the terror of degradation and barbarism. So please, for the sake of the working class of the entire world, never stop for one moment in the defense of Spanish Democracy, in the collecting of funds, clearly explaining to the people the meaning of Spain, and follow this with definite actions building the united front against fascism. Please; I cannot stress the importance of the united front as I would like to. . . .

I am writing this letter from a hospital bed—a bullet through my right foot, a slight, clean, but very painful wound taking about a month to heal, my eyes half-closed from the anti-tetanus injections, my hands weak from loss of blood—so you will have to excuse the incoherency and the poor script. By the time you get this letter I hope to be back at the front—again doing my darndest to answer not for myself so much as for a young kid lying in the next bed.

Seventeen years old. . . . Graduation exercises, parties, hikes, puppy love. . . . Gee, life is grand; beautiful! What a myth! What a lie!

This kid has just reached his seventeenth birthday. Emaciated, weak, old—instead of hiking in the hills with his best girl he has been hiking through the mud and filth of the front for the past five months, his "puppy love" a rifle the size of his own body. The only grand and beautiful thing in his life is his knowledge that he, together with the other millions of Spanish anti-fascists, will clear their country of the cannibals of civilization.

Spain cannot be defeated when it can put out such heroes. Those young kids will have their graduation exercises in a free workers' and farmers' Spain.

These murderers are not satisfied with the use of bullets—they use dum-dums—and recently they have perfected a new brainchild of the civilized scientists from Heidelburg University—an exploding bullet!

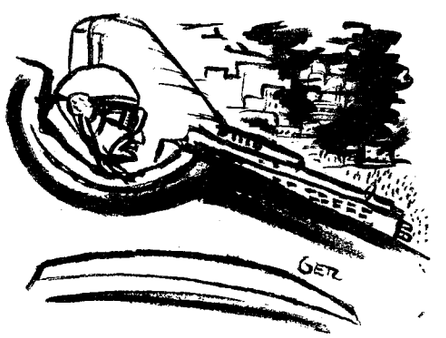
You have heard of the effects of the dum-dums—a deep, ragged hole. The exploding bullet not only leaves a deep, ragged hole, but smashes to bits all bone structure in the hit part.

The kid was operated upon today from the effects of an exploding bullet. He lost four fingers of his left hand and possibly the use of his entire arm. And yet he lies there—not a whimper—worrying about my foot which has blood on the bandage. He says "Malo!"—"Bad!"

Back home there, did I hear someone in his party branch say he had too much work? He is tired hearing about Spain? Anyway, he has collected a great amount of money ($20) for Spanish democracy and therefore has done his part?

Every one of you must begin to realize the danger of fascism and war—must multiply your efforts 100 percent for Spanish democracy and for the united front in the United States. If they still are not convinced, tell them of the eighteen-year-old Young Communist Leaguer of Spain who has been fighting since July, and wounded three times, lost his brother in action, his father and mother slaughtered at Málaga. Yet while on leave, he is taking part in war maneuvers so as to perfect his ability to fight fascism still more courageously and correctly. When he found we were Americans, his face beamed. Here was the great American working class come to support the Spanish people in this strife. He asked me questions about the American Y.C.L.—what they are doing, etc., and ended with the statement of fact: "We Spanish youth, American youth, youth of all lands—together—will smash fascism in Spain and then in the rest of the world." Can we fail such courageous, untiring fighters against fascism?

Now a few words about myself. I spent a few very enjoyable hours in Gay Paree and then began the long, tedious railroad travel to our point of destination. The outstanding event was the raising of the right hand by literally hundreds of thousands of French and Spanish people in the Red salute wherever we passed. Think of it—a French traffic cop gave us the Red salute with the little white club they carry. Upon reaching Spain we went into training and then to the front.



Arthur Getz

I guess the story of my wound is now in order. We were attacking on a wide front. My group had advanced approximately 150 yards, to within 125 yards of the fascist trenches (you can gather from this how close we are—we actually sing and yell slogans at each other during lulls in fighting), when their machine-gun got the range. I heard the bullets bite dust within ten feet, so I took a racing dive for the nearest tree. While in mid-air a bullet hit my foot, knocking me over on my side with the power of a sledge-hammer wielded by a giant blacksmith.

This is funny. While lying wounded, what I thought was a rock hit the right side of my ass and prevented me from sitting for almost two days. When I reached the hospital, I remembered that my glasses were in my right hip pocket. Lo and behold, I noticed two bullet holes in my trousers. Pulling out my eyeglass case, I found a bullet had torn its way through the case, melting the metal frame, smashing the lenses, and casually leaving without leaving a scratch on my little white ass. Ha! Ha! And one on good old Uncle Sam, too. You remember my passport was stamped "Not valid in Spain"—well, the bullet also cut my passport in half.

This fight has taught me more about working-class activity than all I've studied in the past years. I would not have missed this for five such wounds as I have received.

Have you heard the "International" sung in a dozen odd tongues? Have you heard the cry during mealtime for more bread in many varied tongues? It gives new meaning to the words, "the International Soviet shall be the Human Race!"

A group of eight from Jugoslavia, the remainder of thirteen who started across the border—I hope the five were killed and not taken alive by the fascists. . . . The young twenty-year-old boy who is fighting in his second revolution—first as a Socialist in the Austrian Schutzbund, and now as a Y.C.L.er of Austria. . . . The many Germans who dared the border guards of Naziland to come to Spain to fight against Hitler and fascism. . . . The four Negro boys from Chicago with us—two of whom have already died a hero's death. . . .

A Tower of Babel but with one basic difference. Although we speak different languages, we understand our mutual fight and slogan: "Fight against fascism by supporting Spanish democracy."

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William Gropper

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Covering the News

Covering the events of the week ending April 12

WITH the threat of President Roosevelt's judiciary reform program hanging over its head, a mercurial, and possibly frightened, Supreme Court decided that the government of the United States may protect labor's right to collective bargaining. After weeks of inexcusable delay, the Court finally declared that the Wagner labor relations act was constitutional, thereby confounding such defenders of the Court as Henry Ford, who only three days before had announced, "We'll never recognize the United Automobile Workers' Union or any other union."

In five separate verdicts the Court upheld the Wagner act, once unanimously and four times by five-to-four decisions. All nine justices supported the National Labor Relations Board in its order to the Washington, Virginia, & Maryland Coach Co. to reinstate employees discharged for union activity. The switch of Justice Roberts to the liberal side of the bench was the deciding factor in the other four cases, which considerably broadened the scope of "interstate commerce." These involved the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp., covering the steel industry; the Friedman-Harry Marks Clothing Co., covering clothing manufacturers; the Fruehof Trailer Co., for the auto manufacturers, and the Associated Press.

In the A.P. case, involving the dismissal of Morris Watson for his work in the American Newspaper Guild, the traditional tory quartet of Sutherland, Butler, Van Devanter, and McReynolds held that the "application of the act here has resulted in an unconstitutional abridgment of the freedom of the press." Their contention was held to be "unsound" in the majority opinion written by Justice Roberts, who declared that "the publisher of a newspaper has no special privilege to invade the rights and liberties of others."

Speculation was rife concerning the effect of the decisions on the two outstanding issues of the day: growth of the C.I.O. and the Roosevelt program for changing the complexion of the Supreme Court. While reactionaries were expected to point to the decisions as an instance of the Court's lofty impartiality, it was felt in other circles that the High Bench had merely revealed a capricious unpredictability and a canny capacity to trim sail with the wind. Notable in this connection was the fact that McReynolds, with eleven knifings to his credit, upheld a major New Deal act for the first time.

PRECEDING this decision, labor rose to the crest of a new wave of spectacular activity during the week, with the C.I.O., as usual, leading the nation-wide strike mobilization. With the Chrysler Motor Corp. signed up, 37,000 workers at a huge rally in Detroit heard C.I.O. chief John L. Lewis greet them and their victorious battle in the name of the committee. "In July of 1936," said Lewis, "I maintained that no artificial barriers of restraint nor any judicial interdict could impound or dam that river of sentiment which flows in the hearts and minds of the workers of this country in their desire to organize and establish industrial democracy. My word has come true to a greater degree than my critics at that time ever expected. Labor in America is on the march. To labor in the automobile industry, there has come into being an organization that is 300,000 strong."

In subduing Chrysler, second of the great auto corporations to be signed up by the United Automobile Workers since the beginning of the year, the union won an agreement that the company would deal with it "as the collective-bargaining agency for such of its employees who are members of the union." This, it was pointed out, was *de facto* recognition of the union as the exclusive bargaining agency for the entire Chrysler working personnel, since the company union has been effectively stripped of whatever power it once enjoyed. The corporation, according to the agreement, recognized and promised not to interfere with the right of its employees to become members of the union. No aid, it was agreed, would be given by the company to any group or organization other than the U.A.W. "for the purpose of undermining" the latter union. Other clauses closely followed the familiar pattern of the accord reached previously with General Motors. With the Chrysler agreement under its belt, the U.A.W. declared itself set to tackle Ford.

Joe Bartlett

Ford—It won't be long now

Also pushing ahead in its campaign, the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee, in the month following the signing by the U.S. Steel Corp., signed fifty-one steel companies to union contracts, bringing the total number of lodges formed in steel centers up to 492. In ten days following March 2 (the date U.S. Steel signed), it was announced, approximately 35,000 new members joined the S.W.O.C. To add to the significance of the victory, the C.I.O. declared that followers of the steel union in the Bethlehem mills had "virtually captured the company unions."

Similar success was recorded by the Textile Workers' Organizing Committee, which revealed that fifty-eight textile companies had already been brought under union contract since the T.W.O.C. drive was initiated. Other advances were recorded for the smelter workers in Denver, Colo.; for rubber workers in Akron, O.; for utility workers in New York City, and in dozens of smaller enterprises scattered throughout the nation.

THE C.I.O. activities spread to Canada during the week when Ontario pickets defied the far-famed Canadian Mounted Police at the Toronto General Motors plant. With Premier Mitchell Hepburn provoking the workers by declaring that "We'll raise an army if necessary" to crush the C.I.O. campaign in Canada, union organizer Hugh Thompson of Detroit answered Hepburn's threats of police action with a counter-declaration that even if he sends fifty thousand militia into Oshawa, General Motors "would still be forced to sign an agreement before it builds another motor car in Canada." While the General Motors officials offered their own eight-point proposal for the "solution" of the "difficulty," strikers were heartened by the fact that two members of Hepburn's cabinet opposed their premier's stand on relief. So sharp did the disagreement appear to be, that Hepburn insisted that the two cabinet officers (David A. Croll, minister of public welfare, and Attorney-General Arthur W. Roebuck) back him in his stand, or resign from their posts.

Equally spectacular was the ousting of 1000 sit-down strikers by a mob of company thugs and farmers led by the American Legion, in Hershey, Pa. Strikers were brutally assaulted, driven from the huge chocolate factory, and, bleeding profusely from scalp and face wounds, forced to run the gauntlet between two lines of attackers armed heavily with spiked clubs (see p. 7). It was at the peak of these struggles, significantly, that the Supreme Court upheld the Wagner Labor Relations Act.

DESPITE a better-than-average display of fireworks, Capitol Hill during the week gave off more heat than light. In one of the stormiest sessions of the year, the House dealt a death-blow to the vicious resolution of Representative Dies (D., Tex.) calling for an investigation into sit-down strikes and the labor movement in general. Condemned as a

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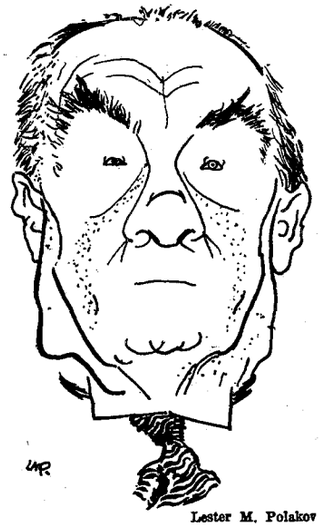
projected "witch-hunt," the investigation was rejected by a vote of 236 to 149. But lest progressives take too much heart over the Dies defeat, House leaders promptly paved the way for a favorable consideration of the watered Senate resolution on sit-downs. The Senate version, calling for no investigation, contented itself with expressing the opinion that "the so-called sit-down strike is illegal and contrary to sound public policy." And then, to soften the blow, the senators went on to express the "sense of the Congress" that the industrial-spy system and the denial of the right of collective bargaining are likewise "contrary to sound public policy." Seventy-five senators voted for the resolution, with only Borah, Frazier, and Lundeen in opposition.

With the Court fight already cutting a broad swath through party alignments, a further threat to Democratic cohesion loomed with the approach of a new relief appropriation. New taxation or further cuts in relief: Congress must decide. And from all appearances, it will take powerful mass pressure and strong progressive action to keep the relief rolls intact. Rumors were current concerning the formation of a Congressional bloc bent on reducing Roosevelt's probable recommendation for a work relief fund of $1,200,000,000. At the same time, another bloc was forming under Representative Maverick (D., Tex.) to demand a $2,400,000,000 works program, financed out of new taxation. And finally, there was the bill introduced by Representative Boileau (Prog., Wis.) calling for $3,000,000,000 for the W.P.A. during the coming year, together with a billion-dollar federal contribution to state relief. In support of the Boileau bill, David Lasser, of the Workers' Alliance, called on *Harry Hopkins, W.P.A. administrator,* while four governors called at the White House to induce President Roosevelt to continue W.P.A. at its present levels. Hopkins intimated that this could not be done with the appropriation of $1,537,000,000 originally hinted at by Roosevelt, much less with the reduced amount he is now expected to ask. Nevertheless, Senate Democratic floor leader Robinson announced, "My feeling is that the expenditures for relief may be slightly reduced."

Aside from attending military displays, Congress marked the twentieth anniversary of America's entry into the World War by the introduction of a petition to remove from a committee pigeon-hole the bill of Representative Ludlow (D., Ind.) requiring a national referendum before the United States could take part in a future war. With a neat sense of balance, the Senate succeeded in putting into a pigeon-hole the resolution of Senator Nye which in effect would call upon the State Department to account for the failure of the administration to invoke an arms embargo against the fascist powers for their open warfare in Spain.

MORE eloquent than pulpit speeches and more binding than pledges, an armed struggle in Spain and an election in Belgium



Lester M. Polakov

Baldwin—Tried camouflage

—both against fascism—commemorated the week in which Americans entered the fight to "make the world safe for democracy." The Belgian election emphasized what the Spanish war had already indicated: world fascism is no longer on the offensive. Premier Paul Van Zeeland of the little country strategically situated between France and Germany was elected deputy of a Brussels constituency over fascist leader Léon Degrelle of the Rexist Party by a vote of 275,840 to 69,242, with only 18,358 blanks. Degrelle had forced the issue by ordering M. Olivier, a Rexist deputy, to resign, in order to prove that his party had increased its popular backing since the last election. Premier Van Zeeland, supported by the liberals, Communists, Socialists, and Catholics against a coalition of Rexists and Flemish Nationalists (separatists with strong Nazi leanings), accepted the challenge by running for the same office. Degrelle overplayed his hand by starting a whispering campaign to the effect that Cardinal Van Roey, Belgium's chief primate, was tacitly backing him and that both King Leopold III and Premier Van Zeeland knew of and supported his deal to give the Flemish Nationalists autonomy. The Degrelle bubble burst when Cardinal Van Roey issued a statement denouncing the Rexists in these vigorous terms: "We are convinced that the Rexist Party constitutes a danger for the country and the church," and urging support for Van Zeeland. Both Leopold III and Van Zeeland sharply denied the allegation that they had been privy to the political trade between Degrelle and the Flemish Nationalists. Degrelle's vote represented a drop of 4479, and Premier Van Zeeland was able to tell reporters: "The result exceeds my wildest hopes." The electoral battle was fought on a fascism-versus-democracy basis. Degrelle's tie-up with the Nazis was established by the presence of fraternal delegates representing the Belgian Rexist Party at the last National Socialist Congress in Nuremberg, Germany.

The war in Spain settled down to another long pull on the Madrid, Cordoba, and Basque fronts. The loyalists capt[illegible] attention by their strenuous attempts [illegible] ise the siege of Madrid; they hoped to wipe [illegible]ut the half-mile rebel salient of 10,000 insurgents in the Casa de Campo and Aravaca sectors, west and south of the capital. After days of fierce bombardment and shelling, General Miaja was able to announce that the rel[illegible] University City had been isolated wi[illegible]e blasting of a rebel pontoon bridge. One effect of the government offensive on the Madrid front was the easing of insurgent pressure against the Basques, owing to withdrawal of rebel units from the siege of Bilbao to reinforce their lines at Madrid. Insurgent resistance stiffened on the Cordoba front and the government advance was temporarily halted.

Great Britain again showed its hand favoring rebel interests by publicly warning British shipping to refrain from bringing cargoes of food to Bilbao, Basque capital. Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin tried to camouflage the pro-rebel bias by adding that his government "would not tolerate interference with British ships at sea." Labor parliamentarian Clement R. Attlee rejected the government's position as "unsatisfactory." It was also revealed that British importers were financing rebel armament to the tune of more than $11,000,000 by the purchase of oranges and sherry, a sum little less than that expended the year before the present war.

ITALIAN papers served notice that Mussolini intends to send another army of "volunteers" for rebel General Franco's depleted armies by laying down a newspaper barrage against France alleging large-scale violation of the non-intervention agreement. Premier Léon Blum met the challenge in a statement which said: "It is only too easy to guess what the reasons are for these accusations and what their goal is; their untrue character readily appears." Achille Starace, secretary of the Italian Fascist Party, gave added point to the anti-French press campaign by refusing to permit the issuance of passports to Italian football players scheduled to meet a French team in Paris, on the pretext that the game would invite anti-Italian demonstrations. Final Italian plans in respect to Spain may not be forthcoming until after the meeting between Mussolini and Nazi Air Minister Hermann Goering, reported scheduled for some time between April 20 and 30.

The "German Liberty Party" made its appearance with a letter campaign in the German mails demanding the repudiation of National Socialism by the German people and a plebiscite on Nazi intervention in Spain. "The German Liberty Party is a fraternal band of determined men and women who know only one duty—to serve Germany; only one joy in life—to help the German people; only one purpose—to win freedom," said the declaration. The party's manifesto stated that its ranks were composed of Catholics, Protestants, former German Nationalists, Socialists, and Democrats, as well as rank-and-file members of the Nazi Party.

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The Secret Socialist Convention

What really happened on vital issues is revealed here for the first time by an attending delegate

By Howard Bronson

Because the recent Socialist Party convention was held behind closed doors and no observers or reporters were admitted, this report by a delegate to that convention is of special importance and interest. The Socialist press has published only a very vague and general picture of the meetings, omitting all mention of the debates and conflicting tendencies. The very nature of the convention makes it impossible for us to confirm anything but that the author was a bona-fide delegate whose impressions richly deserve to be on record.—THE EDITORS.

SEVERAL small things were more or less symbolic of the entire proceedings at the recent special convention of the Socialist Party.

A public rally the night before the convention attracted only seven hundred people—hardly an impressive number for the second largest city in the country. At the literature tables, only nine titles were on sale, of which five were definitely Trotskyist. A request for a copy of Paul Porter's *Which Way for the Socialist Party?*, anti-Trotskyist in content, met with the response, "Never heard of it." A number of delegates seemed uncomfortable at the spectacle of a working-class party meeting in the luxury of the LaSalle Hotel.

Among the 125 or 135 delegates present, four main groupings—by no means fixed—were discernible. The pro-Trotskyites numbered twenty-five or thirty, coming chiefly from New York, Illinois, and California. They played a shrewd line and were well organized. Since they have most to gain by staying in the party, their pose was to support "unity," deploring the possibility of splits and calmly giving way on the one issue on which it seemed that they might be defeated.

The "Wisconsin group," including four or five persons from other states, numbered sixteen to twenty. Their leader, Paul Porter, was the ablest and most realistic among the delegates. Besides giving an excellent argument for the people's front, he was emphatic in demanding that the national secretary give some explanation of the catastrophic decline in membership. Roy Burt, secretary, quietly pigeon-holed and forgot these questions. Although the group as a whole was weak, some members did good work for the labor party. But after the first few sessions, they seemed to grow "tired," to lose interest in the fight. Andrew Biemiller, for example, delivered a very effective speech denouncing the Minneapolis Trotskyites for their support of Mayor Latimer, but failed to follow it up. The Wisconsin delegation was dual in character, including a few aggressive, realistic members, but a greater number of quite typical "Wisconsin Socialists." Two of the latter even offered a resolution to amend the application for membership with a clause disavowing belief in "force and violence."

The "centrists," including the party bureaucracy, constituted the majority of the delegates. These people were honest and sincere, but had no special theoretical and programmatic position; they are skeptical about theory; they "hate factional bickering"; they want to "build the party" and go on campaigning in the good old pre-war fashion. Their votes usually went to measures supported by the Trotskyites, who were most aggressive.

During the first day of the convention, "corridor congresses" concerned themselves with "what to do about the Trotskyites." It appeared at first that a fair-sized opposition might be formed. But as the convention progressed, it developed that only a small group was explicitly committed to expelling the Trotskyites; lacking either convention experience or prestige, they could accomplish little.

After the first day, the agenda was frequently interrupted, and important topics were introduced or postponed almost without notice. Caucuses of non-Trotskyite elements displayed great political confusion. Three caucuses attended by myself included people as divergent in their views as Alfred Baker Lewis and Albert Sprague Coolidge of Massachusetts, who were worried only about electing "sensible men" to the N.E.C.; and on the other hand Alton Lawrence, S. R. Jennings, and Henry Black were interested mainly in driving out the Trotskyites. The majority of the leaders simply would not discuss the question at all, and smothered any attempt to face the issue. Some of the "leaders" frankly admitted that the Trotskyites would kill the party if permitted to remain in it, but these "leaders" always dodged doing anything about them.

THE DOMINANT INFLUENCE of the Trotskyites was clear in many of the few resolutions passed. The resolution on war, presented by Gus Tyler, was the usual sectarian phrasemongering that comes from his group, ignoring the existence of the Soviet Union as a dominant factor in world politics, ignoring the danger of fascism, ignoring the possibilities of combining many anti-war forces for the purpose of resisting war. One of Tyler's supporters remarked that it was "a crystal-clear gem of Socialist theory." To which another delegate caustically replied, "Yes, but it has nothing to do with existing reality." Tyler, in speaking for his resolution, brazenly denounced the people's front and referred to the American League as a "league for war and for fascism." Only a few delegates spoke on the war resolution, but the majority supported Tyler's position. Two more realistic delegates got in a few words in opposition, but they were drowned out.

Discussion on the people's front was wholly dominated by the pro-Trotskyites. Herbert Zam was the principal speaker, and by far the funniest spectacle in the convention. After watching Zam expatiating for half an hour on "people's frontism" as being "worse than the coalition of the past because it even extends to the trade unions," in that slow, staccato voice that seemed to keep time with the jerking of his head, it was hard to realize that we were in an emergency convention of a working-class party, and not in a clever burlesque. In reply, Paul Porter gave an excellent defense of the people's front, drawing many of his illustrations direct from experience in Wisconsin, and ridiculing both the specific arguments and the general position of the Trotskyite speakers. But his views received trifling support; the majority of the speakers approved the sectarian approach, and though Zam's resolution received minor amendments, it was adopted.

In the very one-sided debate on trade-union policy, Murray Baron gave an extraordinarily clear and realistic discussion of present practical problems, centering on the complexities of C.I.O.-A.F. of L. relationships. If that speech could be printed, it would be a real addition to the literature of trade-union tactics. Frank Trager, who spoke on the other side, contented himself with proving that "the Socialist Party is not isolated," by listing cases where Socialists are doing good work among the unions; naturally, there were a considerable number. Again the majority of the speakers supported a stuck-in-the-mud position, and the final resolution "enthusiastically supported" the C.I.O., but also listed most of its real or imagined shortcomings and urged the formation of a "revolutionary opposition" within. Such a resolution will prove anything but an aid to active Socialist trade unionists.

The discussion on unemployed work and the Workers' Alliance was similarly one-sided, with the sectarians winning. David Lasser gave an excellent analysis of affairs within the Workers' Alliance and a powerful plea for close coöperation with the Communists in building the union. Brandon Sexton, the other main speaker, devoted nearly all his time to demanding that Socialists organize "Socialist opposition" blocs within the Alliance. He insisted that the main task of Socialists was to fight Communists. Despite the dangerous lack of realism in this position, five of the six dele-

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gates who spoke during discussion period supported Sexton's position.

The resolution on united fronts, written by Harry Laidler, is as safe and conservative a document as even James Oneal could wish for. The party is in favor of united efforts in specific cases on civil liberties, etc., but each case must be "considered on its own merits." In considering any specific united front, the "question of the effect of such united front upon the subject to be achieved and . . . upon the Socialist Party must be seriously considered." And for any possible united front with the Communists, a whole group of special precautions is laid down. All of which makes interesting reading and will doubtless protct the "revolutionary purity" of the party, but it bears no relation to unifying labor.

On the question of a labor party, Norman Thomas offered a resolution which, although still some distance from the frank and enthusiastic support which is needed, was a few steps in advance of previous declarations. It did call for Socialist support in building national and state farmer-labor parties, but some of the qualifying phrases are hardly necessary. Discussion of the resolutions showed again that the sectarians were in a strong position. Albert Goldman offered a substitute labor party resolution which was as bad as anything the Trotskyites have turned out, even suggesting that the S.P. should definitely fight "in all forms of activity" any labor party that might be formed. The Thomas resolution was eventually adopted, as was also a motion by McDowell that the Goldman resolution be referred to the N.E.C. for further study.

The "Minneapolis situation" received a very incomplete airing. The essential facts in the case are these: Mayor Latimer was supported in his first campaign by the Farmer-Labor Party. After election he became a reactionary, police-using strikebreaker. The Farmer-Labor Party withdrew its support. Vincent Dunne and a few other Trotskyites in the Minneapolis S.P. withdrew from the F.-L.P. and renominated Latimer. As Andrew Biemiller remarked, the whole situation "stinks pretty badly." However, the labor-party committee turned in a compromising, white-washing report, pleading ignorance of the details and mildly chiding Dunne, not for supporting an anti-labor candidate repudiated by the Farmer-Labor Party, but for failing to consult with the N.E.C.

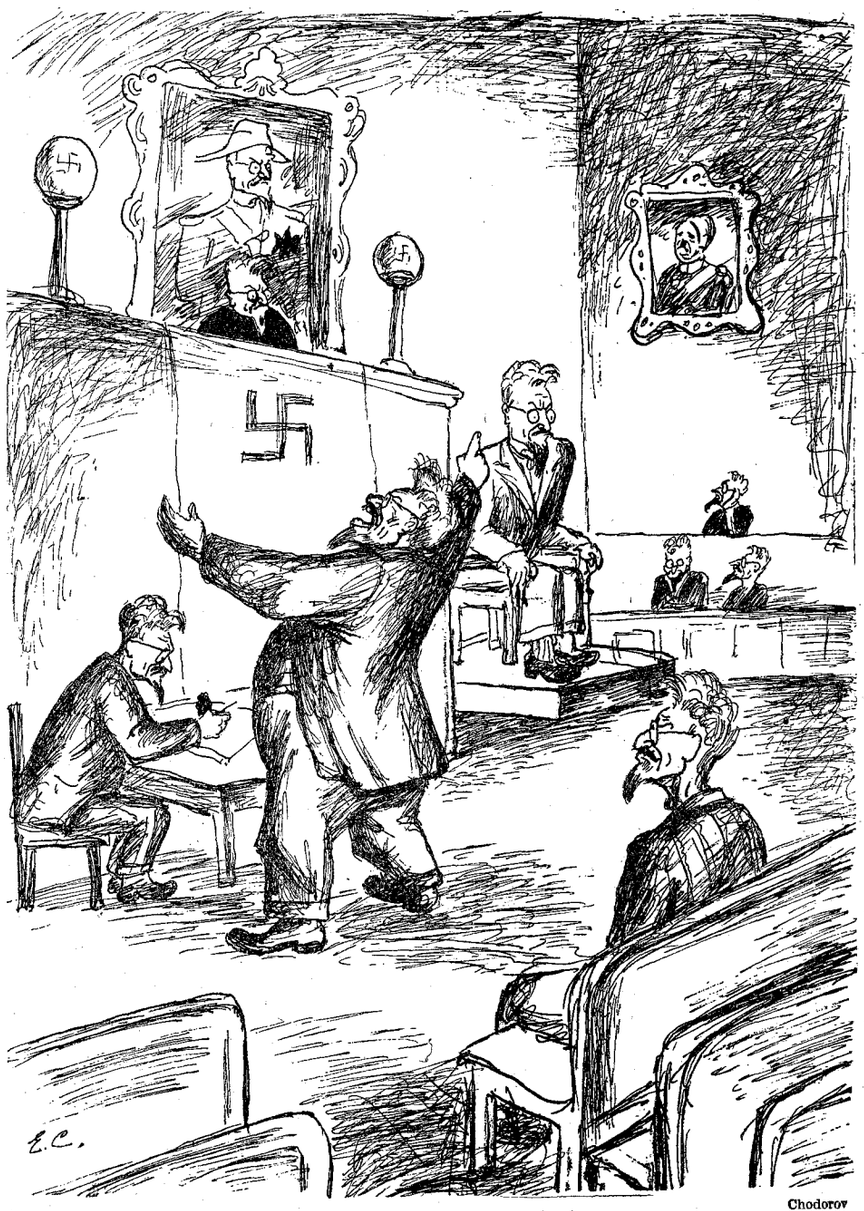
The convention passed a resolution forbidding the publication of internal factional organs. On the surface, this appears as a defeat for the Trotskyites. Both the *Appeal* and *Clarity* groups agreed to suspend before the resolution was passed, another gesture in the direction of "unity." But when we consider the centrist and vacillating nature of the new N.E.C., the fact that there are half a dozen ways of evading the resolution, the fact that Gus Tyler is still running the *Call* and Jim Cannon is editing a regional official organ, the apparent defeat of the Trotskyites may easily be but a temporary and strategic one.

The new constitution does contain a number of advances, moves in the direction of greater centralization, and provisions for a party-owned press, etc. Ten years ago these would have been real gains. But this is 1937, and the advances were by inches where they should have been by yards. During the debate on the constitution, Max Raskin, chairman, made a remark that is likely to be a classic. In reply to a delegate who objected to the middle-class, white-collar composition of the N.E.C., Raskin said: "Yes, but I am sure the constitution is flexible enough to allow for the election of a worker to the N.E.C."

If the party were headed by a strong executive committee, there might be a chance of counteracting some of the backward moves. But most of the members of the new N.E.C are as uncertain and as weak as were their predecessors. With reference to the crucial issue of Trotskyism, three are sympathetic to the Trotskyites, three are pretty definitely opposed, and nine will probably just "go along," as in the recent past they have usually been found more or less supporting the Trotskyites.

Agricultural and farmers' problems, together with Negro and youth work, along with other key topics, got no attention whatever.

The picture is indeed a gloomy one. The Trotskyites made gains of a substantial nature. Though individual Trotskyites hold but one or two national positions, they have had a controlling voice on the party papers. The party has lost more than 8000 members, half the former total, in twelve months. It is certain that the decline will continue, perhaps at an accelerated pace. This is not merely a case of a splinter group withering away; the Socialist Party still has an enormous tradition, considerable prestige, and in some localities a good deal of direct influence. The one thing that can be done now, in those locals that have appreciable influence in their communities, is to carry on the fight for a progressive and militant policy, building the unity of the workers and farmers on all fronts.



Trotsky on Trial

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The Symbolism of the Sit-Down

The logic of the worker's kinship to the machine is sketched in poetic outline by this new tactic

By Matthew Josephson

WHAT is the meaning of the wave of sit-down strikes in America? We feel ourselves in the presence of a tremendous historic event; but the professional oracles of public opinion do not clarify us. There is a babel of strident voices uttering alarms, appeals, charges, counter-charges, and no little hokum.

Mr. Mark Sullivan warns us that in the "seizures" of property we are witnessing a far from peaceful "revolution," the work of "outlaws." Another professional agitator, Mr. Walter Lippmann, expresses the most heart-rending fears for the rights and liberties of a minority of the workers. Liberty, for what—to demand lower wages? Property owners and chambers of commerce call for the impeachment of the pacific governor of Michigan; they petition that the President employ military force to put down "rebellions."

Meanwhile other voices, even from the committee rooms of the United States Senate, tell us that the industrial magnates themselves are "lawless." A member of the President's cabinet, Mrs. Perkins, remarks vaguely that the legality of present union tactics is "in process of evolution." The leaders of the militant industrial-union movement, on the other hand, assure us that their operations are peaceful and involve no unrightful possession or claims to property. In any case, their strong point seems to lie not in explanation or apologies, but in action.

What does it all mean? What is happening? Above all, we must search for the *sociological* meaning of these dramatic events which suddenly strain to the utmost existing institutions, courts, police, civil authorities, capital.

FIRST, what we are looking at is surely the arrival of the long awaited industrial-union movement, which was visioned here fifty years ago, and which Thorstein Veblen later pictured as the one inevitable solution for our social problem, the only course toward industrial democracy. It is a historical "recurrence," but upon a gigantic scale, developing immeasurable impetus and power, throwing up spontaneous novelties and inventions of its own in unexpected form, according to the needs of the moment or the experience of the men in the "front-line trenches." Labor, entering the industrial struggle in earnest, gropes for new methods and devices to effect stoppage, mingles the new and old, and with a Promethean gesture cuts through old conventions, distinctions, subterfuges, creating a new social climate. Lawyers, statesmen, journalists, and historians must thereafter readjust their terms and criteria as well as they can to the changed situation.

J. De Stefano

"We Demand!"

FOR SOME TWO CENTURIES the workers had been growing progressively landless and toolless wherever the system of division of labor was introduced. This change in social relations certainly reached its climax in such a vast urban bee-hive as the new Detroit, where mass production and Taylorism made the worker, in terrifying degree, the helpless automaton and pawn within the iron net of giant tools and machine constructions. Machines, without mercy, reason, or social judgment, yet endlessly life-giving and wealth-giving. The social character of the masters of capital, seen nowadays as multitudinous absentee stockholders and bankers represented by management, also underwent deep changes into impersonal and even grotesque forms. The change from the workman who took pride in his workmanship and in service to a master whom he knew and upon whom, in all human justice, he might depend, into the modern mass-worker, was complete. The past decade of disordered and planless boom and depression, feast and famine, drove home the lesson for the mass-workers of their changed relations.

Who could forget the terrible stoppage or "strike" by absentee owners during the early 1930's, making grass to grow in the factory yards, causing the giant machines to rust when these machines desired to create, setting workers to idle and starve when they desired only to labor? Such were the "strikes" by capital which ruined machines, created scarcity, lowered buying power, spread poverty throughout society, and finally redistributed wealth in fewer hands.

The wonderful thing is that no matter how they are automatized and starved, there remain always in the mass of workers deep reserves of human dignity, of longing for liberty, of courage to fight again for their salvation. In the political-industrial struggles of recent years, the workers, faced with their agonizing problems, have obeyed dimly-understood but sure instincts and memories. No repression and espionage has been able to check their movement toward One Big Union and a genuine participation in the rulership of the industrial society. By the stay-in or sit-down measure they break old bonds, they throw off the curse of landlessness and toollessness.

The workers have not attacked property; they have "sat down" faithfully by the side of the machines which are life and death to them, and guarded them. It is as if they understood suddenly, in this epoch of financial black magic, with its elaborate pyramids of holding companies, interlocking banker directorates, absentee stockholders and non-owning management—it is as if they realized at last

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that *nobody knows any more to whom the machines and the factories truly belong.* It is as if they declared, in effect:

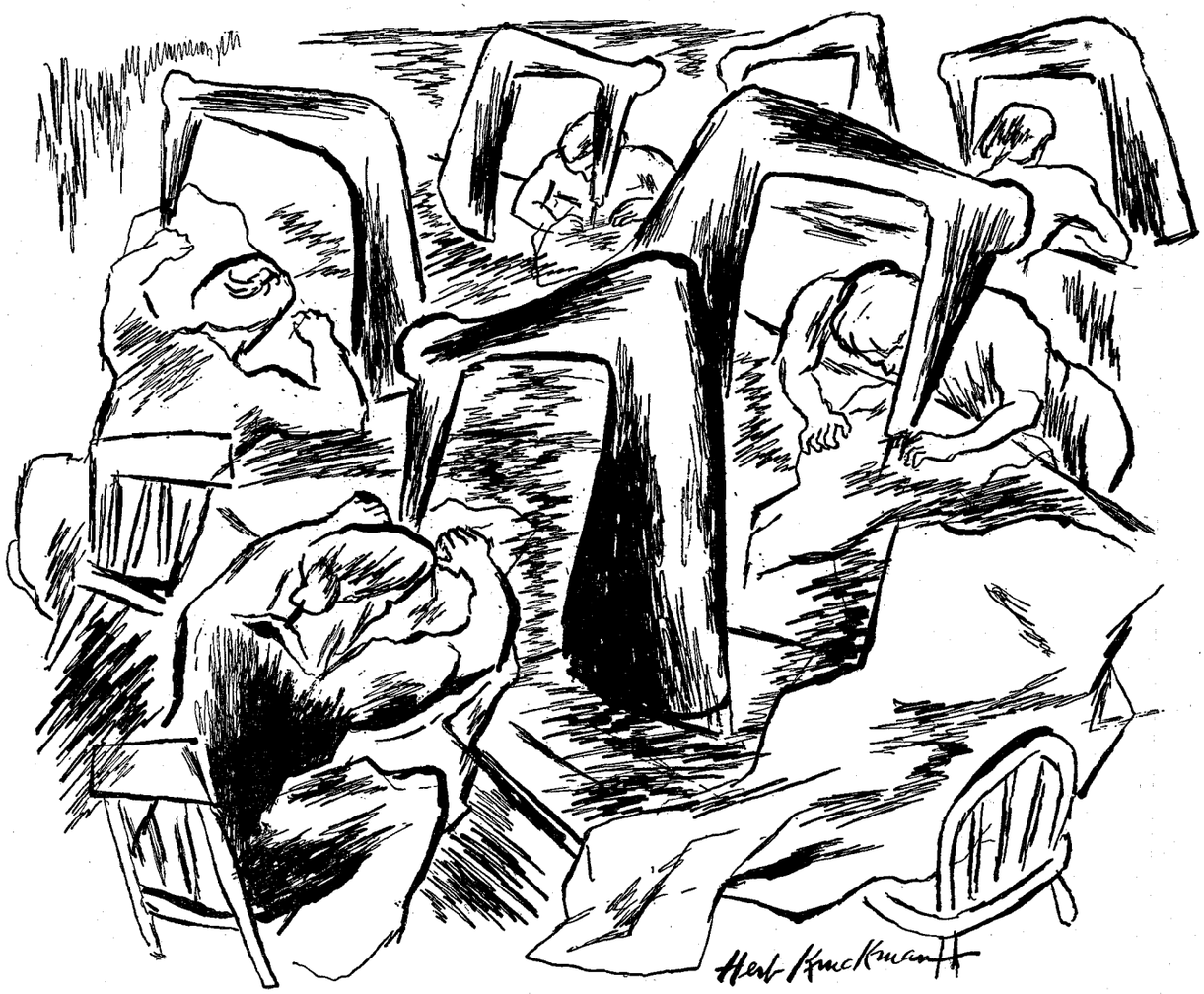
These factories, these machines, at all events, must continue to give us, who made them and know how to work with them, and all the other people of the country who depend on them nowadays, life and breath. They are good machines. They do not ever seem to want to stop, to cease to produce goods, to madden and starve us again, as they did in 1932 and 1933. In other days, when we have resisted passively and quit the machines and waited outside the walls of the factories, fearful things have happened —especially where there were so many idle and desperate men. Their absent owners have used the wealth-giving power of the machines to destroy us, to impoverish all the people, and in the end to ruin the great machines themselves. The machines are said to belong only to their absent owners; but we know that the people can no longer live without them. They are our machines too. Therefore we guard them and will not leave their side.

The real meaning of the historic "Battle of Flint" and subsequent engagements fought between toolless workers and gargantuan, billion-dollar corporations—are they new Bastilles?—must lie in the healing and defensive character of the workers' action. The workers entered the factories, ready as they showed themselves to die *en masse* if need be —not to seize or plunder property and machines, but *in defense of them.* Like Americans they have been bold and ingenious; having an inherited tradition of democratic order, they have been peaceful and disciplined, despite infinite provocations to violence. It is not the first time that workers have been led to occupy factories, or hold in their hands, momentarily, the means of production. But their remarkable self-restraint at Flint and Detroit in 1937 bespeaks, one might say, their intuitive knowledge of the solemnity of these events, in which they act as the vanguard of society, and conveys more to us than words and pronunciamentos.

Here are no "lawless" seizures of property; but in the absence of a real social control by our political institutions, our legislatures or magistrates, there is a meaningful, deliberate surveillance of the means of production, so that they may be directed more and more toward creative social ends, rather than left ever uncontrolled and irresponsible to men.

You cry out, Mr. Lippmann, at the peril to "sacred" property rights and historic liberties guaranteed in our constitution. But this is merely a device of ideology. What you truly fear is that the employers of labor may lose a portion of their feudal authority to hire and fire, to make the means of production stop and go at their own free whim.

THE old-fashioned craft unionism, yesterday, gave its attention chiefly to the right to the job and the betterment of wages, but in reality changed nothing, marched always one ste forward, two steps backward. The industri unions, with their method of the One Big Union and their collateral political program, approach the conquest of part of the real controls of our industrial life, and work toward a real redistribution of wealth. Has it not been prophesied that the workers formed the predestined class which, for its own preservation, must in the long run struggle to save society from itself? They may not, most of them, read books, law records, findings of senatorial investigations, but they act uncannily as if they knew what the rest of us have been learning only lately: that the capitalist management is not democratic, is not necessarily honest (even toward its own absentee partners), not necessarily prudent, and almost never socially responsible. But with labor on guard against the anarchy of capital, our society may win to new and lasting health.



Herb Kruckman

SEEING AMERICA FIRST

X—Impression of a Sweatshop

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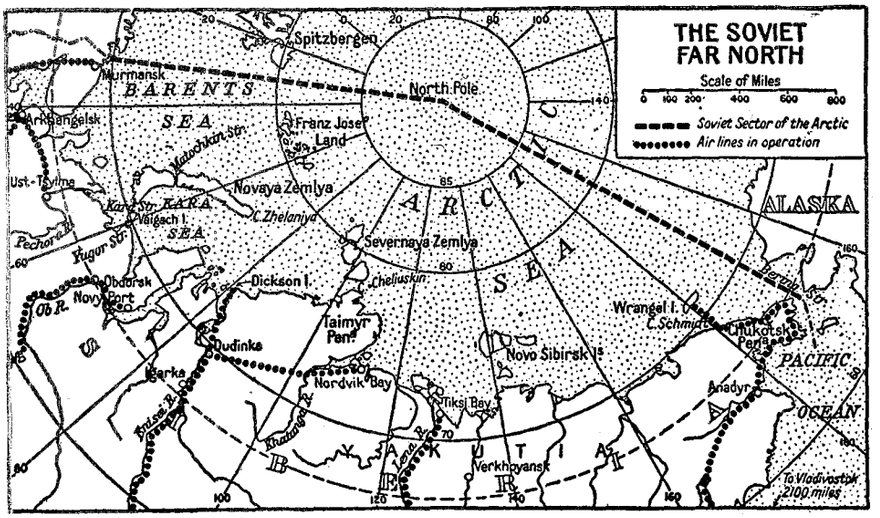

Courtesy "Foreign Affairs"

I'm Going to the Soviet Arctic

The author of "Eskimo" sees there an interesting contrast with northern regions under capitalism

By Peter Freuchen

AS TOLD TO JOHN STARK

PEOPLE who write about the arctic and who have never been there possess a repertory of several lies. One is about the great cold that increases as you go north, another is the impossibility of anyone but an eskimo living north of certain degrees.

Though these popular impressions are pure fiction, they have the immortality of legends. But in the Soviet arctic such imaginings are giving way month by month as arctic development strides on. Having been governor of Greenland for many years, and having explored in and about Alaska and northern Canada, I am quite well acquainted with what has been done in developing arctic resources on this side of the water. But few non-Russians have seen what is being done in the great Siberian arctic regions.

That is why I accepted with pleasure when the General Administration of the Northern Sea Route of the U.S.S.R. invited me to join an expedition along the polar route this summer.

When this appears I shall be well on my way to my home in Denmark, whence I shall travel to Moscow. There a long train trip to Irkutsk awaits me. From this city it is possible to fly to Yakutsk, where the sphere of action of the Northern Sea Route begins.

This flying trip to Yakutsk is no venture now, since regular airlines such as we know of in Europe and America operate along the valleys of the Ob, Yenisei, and Lena rivers. Even so remote an outpost as Wrangel Island has a regular plane service communicating with the mainland all year round; and Wrangel Island is above the 70th parallel.

You can get a fair idea of the advances made by the U.S.S.R. in arctic development if you realize that a North American equivalent of these air routes would be regular airline service between Greenland and Alaska. What is interesting to me about this is that the natural, physical conditions are practically the same; there is some other reason why the Soviet Union can and does rapidly outdistance us in arctic development despite the fact that the North American arctic has been exploited for centuries by the Hudson's Bay Co. and other agencies.

BUT to begin at Yakutsk. Since my main interest lies in observing the living habits of the various arctic peoples, I shall travel down the Lena and visit the various reindeer farms, fur-collecting posts, and other industries of the Yakut villages.

These natives of the arctic, one of the twenty-six nationalities which hitherto roamed the north of Siberia, were formerly entirely ignorant of even the most rudimentary agriculture. It will be interesting to see how they have now taken to farming, fodder-grass raising, and vegetable growing. This activity, supplementing their deer breeding, hunting, and fishing, should tend to adapt them to a more settled existence and must raise them to a new standard of living.

Farming in the arctic may seem a strange occupation, but since pigs can stand the northern climate well, they should prove an ideal stock. Already, at Anadyr, the native eskimos, Chukchi, and Kamchadals are beginning to go in for pig-raising, and the local coöperative dairy is raising milch cows. The reindeer, too, have come in for domestication, since experiments in cross-breeding the native reindeer have produced a thoroughly domesticated animal far superior to the ordinary northern deer. The laboratories of the Leningrad deer-breeding institute have produced foods to supplement the moss and lichen ordinarily considered adequate for reindeer, since these sparse native foods have been found to lack certain nurtritive elements. The diseases to which reindeer often succumb in large herds are being fought with special serums, so that the reindeer may soon become one of the most important economic animals in this whole northern section of the world.

The fur farms that I intend to visit bid fair to show what modernization can bring to the north. The airplane once again comes to the rescue, visiting traps, locating seal herds on the coast, supervising the migration of herds that roam the arctic tundra, and even putting to sea to locate schools of fish for the arctic fishermen.

The building of a polar port is a dramatic sight, and one of the few opportunities for real pioneering in the world today. I shall make a point of visiting cities like Igarka on the Yenisei River, which is an industrial center of over twenty thousand inhabitants, which has been created amidst forests and frozen tundra. When they were building Igarka, the work was carried on in the winter with temperature sometimes as low as sixty degrees below zero. Now there are sawmills producing lumber for the Kara Sea operations, a cannery for the local fisheries, a graphite plant,

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radio and weather stations, as well as schools and hospitals.

Another place that should be a remarkable city to visit is Kirovsk on the Kola Peninsula, where only a few years ago the entire population consisted of a few nomadic Laplanders roaming the snowy wastes with their reindeer. Today Kirovsk is a city with forty thousand inhabitants, although it is so far north that for a month and a half there is virtually uninterrupted night and for a month and a half unbroken sunshine. In connection with the phosphate mines there, there has been constructed a 60,000-kilowatt hydroelectric station on the river Niva which is the most northerly hydroelectric plant in the world.

The Kirovsk Polar and Alpine Botanical Gardens, which were organized in 1932, studies the flora of northern regions. These gardens are 3000 acres in extent, with extensive nurseries and flower beds. So far, about twenty-five types of plants have been found which grow well in the Far North. Such institutes are developing local foodstuffs and are leading the way in producing vegetables grown in artificially lighted and heated hothouses during the long arctic winter. This is necessary because vegetables transported during extremely low temperatures freeze on the way and lose their vitamin content.

A. Giordano

ONE of the most interesting voyages I look forward to is the sea voyage from Tixi Bay to Murmansk. Soviet ice-breakers now make it possible to sail across the top of the world as comfortably as if one were crossing the Atlantic in a de-luxe steamer. Again the airplane has made possible this mastery of the unknown North. Although ice-breakers are stationed in the most difficult sections to convey freight and passenger boats through the heavy ice, the scouting airplanes that go ahead to survey the route and relay back to the vessels and to the many polar radio stations, report on weather and ice conditions. With this assistance, steamers are able to navigate thousands of miles of packed ice, frequently enveloped in dense fog. But while one may nowadays sip tea while watching the antics of polar bears from the deck of a modern steamer, the first attempts to discover this new northeastern passage were full of peril.

In 1932 the ice-breaker *Sibiryakov* was the first ship to complete the northeast passage in a single navigating season. For 400 years scientists and navigators had been trying unsuccessfully to find a short route to India and China through the northern seas. It was not until 1868 that the Swedish explorer, Nordenskiöld, was able to get through this passage at all, after first being compelled, however, to spend a winter near Bering Strait. The only expeditions to make the journey since were those of the Russian Vilkitsky, in 1914-5, who spent one winter in the ice, and of Roald Amundsen (1918-20), who was forced to winter for two years before finally breaking through. The *Sibiryakov* made the passage in two months.

This expedition, under Commander Schmidt, left Archangel July 28. After sailing around the northern shore of Northern Land—the first time that this had ever been accomplished—they encountered heavy ice, sometimes over thirty feet thick. Battling the pack ice, several propeller blades broke, the engine was put out of commission, and, finally, the propeller shaft broke off, taking with it the propeller. The vessel drifted eastward with the heavy ice floes. When the ice began to thin out, homemade canvas sails were put up, and, taking advantage of the favorable winds and the current which she had now succeeded in reaching, the ice-breaker slowly made her way toward Bering Sea. Sometimes in order to make headway it was found useful to cast anchor in the ice and kedge the vessel forward by means of a winch. At times explosives were used to blow up the largest and most unyielding ice masses. Thus, in one way or another, but through her own efforts, the *Sibiryakov* reached open water in the Bering Sea on October 1. This unprecedented journey demonstrated that with proper technical equipment it would be possible to establish regular commercial navigation through the northern sea passage.

As the efforts of Soviet explorers were now directed toward the opening up of the Northern Sea Route for practical commercial purposes, it was decided to repeat the voyage of the *Sibiryakov* with a commercial vessel. Accordingly, the *Chelyuskin,* a specially built 4000-ton freight steamer, constructed with some ice-breaker features, was dispatched from Leningrad on July 18, 1933. This journey, although ending in the sinking of the vessel, proved to be one of the most noteworthy in the annals of arctic navigation. The expedition was led by Professor Schmidt, head of the Northern Sea Route Administration. Its 105 members included many of the members of the *Sibiryakov* expedition. There were also on board ten women and two children (one of whom was born as the steamer battled its way through the ice of the Kara Sea), making up the families of a party of scientists who were to replace the group wintering on Wrangel Island. By September they had reached Cape Chelyuskin—about midway along the bleak arctic coast line and the northernmost point of the continent. Twelve vessels were gathered at the mouth of the Lena River, whereas in the entire previous history of arctic navigation only nine ships had ever reached that remote port.

At about 250 miles from Bering Strait, heavy pack ice was encountered and progress became painfully slow. After eighteen days of alternately buffeting and drifting with the ice the vessel was actually in sight of Bering Strait and open water on November 3. But before the last fifteen miles of heavy ice could be negotiated, a fierce gale blew up and swept the ice masses in which the *Chelyuskin* was caught fast far to the northwest. For three months the vessel struggled against the heavy ice fields, and on February 13 a wall of ice thirty feet high crashed against her and split her side from bow to stern. In the two hours that it took the ship to sink, provisions, building materials, and supplies and the entire party on board—with the exception of one man, crushed by a beam—were safely landed.

Then followed the amazing series of rescue expeditions organized by the Soviet government, by air, land, and sea. Airplanes were dispatched from all parts of the arctic; dirigibles were sent by rail and boat as a reserve; dog-team bases were established at the nearest points along the shore with supplies of food. As a final measure, the ice-breaker *Krassin* was overhauled at Leningrad and sent on a 12,000-mile voyage through the North Sea, across the Atlantic Ocean, through the Panama Canal, and up the west coast of North America to the Bering Sea. By the time the vessel reached the Canal Zone all of the 104 persons on the ice floe had been rescued by seven airplanes, after a series of spectacular flights in which fogs, blizzards, and masses of moving ice on the improvised landing-fields and other hazards were successfully overcome. The women and children were taken off the floe on March 5, but it was a month before other planes could arrive at the scene and make their way to the marooned group. The last six persons were carried to the mainland on April 13, exactly two months after the sinking of the vessel.

The *Krassin* arrived in time to transport the rescued members of the expedition from the Chukotsk Peninsula to the steamers which carried them to Vladivostok on their triumphant homeward journey. Then the ice-breaker headed for Wrangel Island to relieve a party which had been operating the least accessible polar station in the world. This group, including a woman explorer, had been on the island for five years, since for that entire period the ice had been too heavy for any vessel to plow through. While waiting to be carried back to civilization, the party put their spare time to good advantage, collecting 2000 fox skins, 600 bear skins, and tons of ivory mammoth tusks.

That summer the ice-breaker *Litke,* for the first time in history, completed the westbound voyage from Vladivostok to Murmansk in a single navigation season.

The year 1935 marked the turning point from the stage of experimental journeys to that of regular navigation on definite schedules. During that season eighty-five vessels sailed in different parts of the arctic, carrying cargoes totaling 500,000 tons.

This "winning of the North" by the Soviet Union raises many interesting questions for the explorer, questions relating to possibility of fundamental change economically, culturally, and anthropologically in the peoples of the Soviet arctic. I am interested in seeing these questions answered, and in seeing the changes with my own eyes.

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Killed in Action

John Lenthier, American actor who didn't do things by halves, met death charging into a hail of fire from Franco's gunners

By Herbert Kline

ON March 7, late at night, comrades Chapelet, Perdix, Delpune, Leglise, and Viguier of the Franco-Belgian International Volunteers, bellied across no-man's land between our lines at Morota and the fascist lines 150 meters distant. They made two trips. They brought back the bodies of ten loyalist dead, all Americans. Their commandant gave them holy hell for taking such chances without permission, but cited them for bravery.

Remember their names: Chapelet, Perdrix, Delpune, Leglise, Viguier. One of the dead men they brought back was John Lenthier, whom all of us knew well as a comrade of the early League of Workers' Theatres days. His body had been lying out there on the blood-stained Morota soil since February 28, the day on which the fascists' Jarama River drive was stopped with a fierce counter-attack by Spanish regiments, supported by Franco-Belgian-British-American and German Internationals. John Lenthier fell in that charge, his body riddled with bullets from a fascist machine gun. I remember talking with him, about death, as people do in Spain, half-serious, half-joking. "Listen, Herb," he said, "if I get bumped off by those fascist bastards, try and get a notice into *New Theatre* and tell them all good-by for me."

John Lenthier was only twenty-two. He was in love. With life. With the theater. With a girl he had married only a year before. Now he is dead, this youth so much in love with life, this young workers' theater actor who played his last part in a charge against the fascist lines at Morota, a charge that left the field strewn with loyalist dead, but that had stopped the fascists' drive to cut the Valencia road, Madrid's main line of communications.

HE WAS from Boston, of old American stock, just enough French in his blood to keep alive the name of the pre-Revolutionary pioneer Lenthier. John knew what it meant to act in the 1930's as our forefathers acted in 1776. He was jailed more than thirty times in the cradle of liberty for such crimes as taking part in strikes, demonstrations, eviction protests; for distributing leaflets and playing in Boston-banned dramas like *Waiting for Lefty*.

I'll never forget the time the Boston New Theatre Group decided to defy the police ban on Odets's taxi-strike play. I was sent up from New York City in an overnight drive to make an anti-censorship speech before the trial performance began. "Give 'em hell!" John whispered when I went on before the play; and then he went on, to give a stirring performance as the labor faker Fatt. John was one of our workers' theater people from the early days when police and American Legion hoodlums used to break up our showings. He knew what it was to work all day, yet find somehow the vitality to help create a militant, fighting theater for workers at night. He had played, long before the *Waiting for Lefty* days, in such agit-props and mass chants as *Scottsboro, Tempo-Tempo, Free Thaelmann, Newsboy,* etc. He took part in our theater conferences at Chicago, in New York City, in Philadelphia. I remember him speaking as delegate of the Bostch group—a tall youth, with long, straight hair, "kinda poetic looking," as one of his buddies in the Internationals here described him. He used to write long letters to the League office and to *New Theatre* about the work in Boston.

Now he's dead. And the dead don't rise in this war.

John knew what he was risking his life for. He was a member of the Communist Party for a year, for four years before, a member of the Young Communist League of Boston. He didn't do things by halves, this boy. He said he joined the Communists because he saw, in the early days of the crisis, that they were putting up the best fight against the madness and heartlessness of capitalist society. He said he decided to go to Spain because he believed (as all of us believe who have come to Spain) that victory against fascism here will be the turning point in the world struggle against the advance of the fascist powers. He was always stressing this point to less politically minded comrades-in-arms.

I last saw John alive one evening, a few weeks before the American boys went into the front lines. The day's training at war was over. John and a lively Irish lad got up an entertainment for the evening. I remember the Irish lad singing song after song that his people love, and a Jewish truck-driver from Brooklyn getting up right afterwards to get a big laugh by repeating several of the songs in a surprisingly fine Irish brogue. Then an automobile worker from Detroit, a chap who had fought with the Chinese Nineteenth Route Army at Chapei, got up and sang Joe Hill's "Scissorbill." A Cuban youth, a friend of Torriente-Brau, the NEW MASSES correspondent who was killed in the defense of Madrid in December, got encore after encore for some amazingly difficult toe-and-tap dancing. A Spaniard sang song after song in the tongue he knew as a child before coming to America to work in a Connecticut shoe factory. A Negro youth from Harlem recited part of Langston Hughes's old chant about Scottsboro. A young Canadian volunteer led the crowd in singing "Allouette."

Then John Lenthier got up and sang the song of the American Abraham Lincoln Battalion. The words are simple. Maybe they don't seem like much when you read them in cold black print. But hearing them sung that night—of, by, and for the volunteers—they were strangely impressive.

We stayed up late that night, John, the young Canadian writers, Ted Allan and Jim Watts, and I. We talked about a great many things, told stories of our past experiences, dreams of the future, planned a walking trip over the Pyrenees after the Spanish work was over. John spoke of work he would like to do in the theater, of the hope he shared with me for workers' films. He asked me to tell him of things I had seen during my recent trip to the U.S.S.R., of the life of the people under socialism, of the theater. We spoke of Stanislavski's new book on acting, of *Theatre Workshop,* of Shepherd Traube's book *So You Want to Go into the Theatre?* John told of experience after experience in making the rounds for jobs, of how sick he was of being told they'd call on him when they needed a Gary Cooper type. We all laughed over this Gary Cooper business. But he really was a bit like Gary: tall, lean. . . .

HE charged bravely, John did. One man among hundreds charging the fascist lines, Spaniards, Frenchmen, Belgians, Germans, Canadians, British, Dutch, Swedes, Czechs—anti-fascists all.

He charged that afternoon of February 28, and his tall young body was riddled with bullets—the new explosive kind with which the Italian fascists have been machine-gunning our men these last few weeks. We who knew him well can have one consolation. His buddies say he died without prolonged agony. "If I go, I want to go fast," he said.

John Lenthier, American, native of Boston, member of the Communist Party, charter member of the New Theatre League, married, dead at twenty-two.

Remember till the day you die. It's only on the stage that dead men rise. And realize that there'll be no peace on earth till the fascism that John Lenthier died fighting is something the youth of tomorrow will look up in history books as we, ten years ago, looked up the Black Plague, not realizing that a new dark age was just around the corner.

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Slum-Clearing the Workers

This first of two articles points the contrast between half-way measures and a real solution

By Sidney Hill

SLUM clearance and low-rent housing are again in the public eye. The Real Property Inventory of 1933-4, the most comprehensive housing survey ever attempted, revealed that one third of the population, about ten million families, lived in sub-standard homes. Even the experts were shocked. They estimated that billions of dollars were immediately needed even to begin to tackle the problem. Today it is no longer news to report that the administration, after four years of ballyhoo, has succeeded in spending less than $100,000,000 on dwellings for about twenty thousand families.

The housing question is not peculiar to these times. Students of the subject know that the same problem, the same roseate solutions and promises, and the same negative results are monotonously recorded in the pages of history.

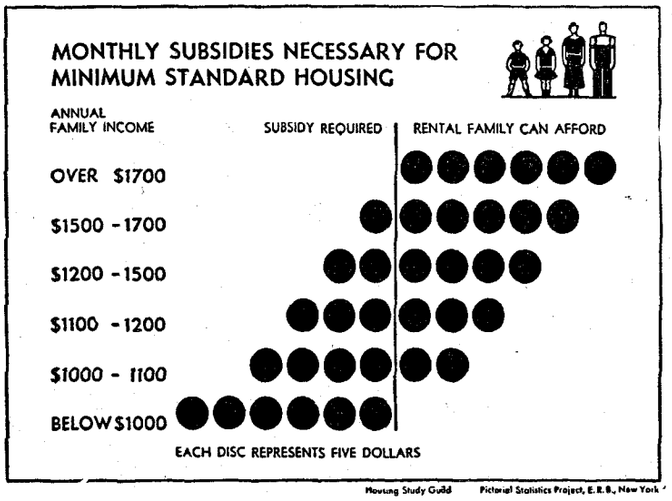
Will history continue to repeat itself? Must we wait until capitalism is abolished for the slums to be cleared and decent homes provided for the low-income groups? Cannot something be done in the meantime? Will the Wagner housing bill solve, or even begin to solve, the problem? What about the Scott bill and any number of other federal, state, and municipal programs? Can the millions of destitute small home-owners, who were recently "rescued" by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, now save themselves from the H.O.L.C.? And what about the slum dweller himself; of what value are his tenant unions and rent strikes?

In this and the following articles, I shall attempt to answer these and other questions related to housing. The present article will deal with actual previous housing experiences and what may be learned from them. The second will concern itself with current housing issues and programs in the United States.

IN A RECENT SPEECH entitled "Millions Living in Misery," Mr. F. T. C. Dresser, district manager of the Housing Division at Cleveland, delivered himself of the following:

> We know, beyond question, that the misery and overcrowding of the slums form the soil of anarchy, the breeding place of crime, the environment which causes physical, mental, and spiritual disintegration. The annual crime cost in the U. S. is $13,000,000,000. An inhabitant of the U. S. is murdered every forty-five minutes. Our homicide ratio last year was 10.7 per 100,000—the highest in the civilized world. There is an average of one burglary committed every minute. Some 140,000 Americans are in prison; some 400,000 regularly engaged in criminal activities. . . .

Mr. Dresser does not rest his case against the slums on "anarchy" and crime alone. He offers proof also that the slums are the breeding places of juvenile delinquency, prostitution, tuberculosis, and a number of other social evils.



Supplementation of Income Necessary to Maintain Minimum Standards of Housing

On the basis of an assumed rental of $30 per dwelling per month, this chart indicates the amount of subsidy which the families in the various income classifications require. A family having an annual income of $1200-$1500, can afford to pay only $20 in rent, and, therefore, would require a monthly subsidy of $10.

We are all familiar with Mr. Dresser's "proof." Innumerable surveys have been made indicating that the areas of greatest incidence of crime, immorality, disease, and what-not, coincide with the slums. What better proof of guilt could there be? The cold figures show that our criminals, our prostitutes, our juvenile delinquents, almost without exception, come from the slums. From the slums also come the tubercular and the insane, the diseased in body and mind. The cure is obvious. Tear down the slums and, *ipso facto*, you strike at the root of all these evils!

Unfortunately, this beautiful simple cure for our social evils does not always work out in practice. England, for example, has had extensive experience in slum clearance and rehousing. It is frequently pointed out to us as a shining model of success in this field. Very well, let us take a good look at English housing.

The experience of the city of Stockton-on Tees is no longer front-page news, but since it is hardly ever mentioned in American housing discussions, it would be well to go over it again. Following the World War, the town council of Stockton vigorously pressed a housing policy which included the demolition of slums and the building of new houses. In the fall of 1927, a slum area known as Housewife Lane was evacuated, and the 152 families living there were moved to an improved area, the Mount Pleasant estate. A similar area, known as Riverside, containing 289 families (human guinea-pigs), remained in the original condition, thereby providing a check on the experiment. The Housewife Lane area consisted of old houses with one or two rooms, and the sanitary conditions were bad. The Mount Pleasant estate seemed to offer everything that modern sanitary science could demand.

Nevertheless, much to everybody's surprise, the removal to the new quarters was followed by a rise in the death rate. During the five years following removal, there was a general increase in the death rate of 8.74 per 1000 among the population of the new Mount Pleasant estate. No such increase occurred among the families remaining in the Riverside slum area.

The health officer made an exhaustive study of the various causes of death in the new area and concluded that the increased rate could not be ascribed to such environmental factors as housing, drainage, overcrowding, or insanitary conditions. There was only one striking difference between the living conditions in the two areas—*in the Mount Pleasant estate rents were higher and consequently there was less money to spend on food, medical care, and other necessities.*

Speaking before the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis on July 13, 1933, Dr. C. G. M. McGonigle, Medical Officer of Health for Stockton-on-Tees, elaborated on the facts relating to the increase in the death rate in the Mount Pleasant estate, and spoke more emphatically as to the cause. He said:

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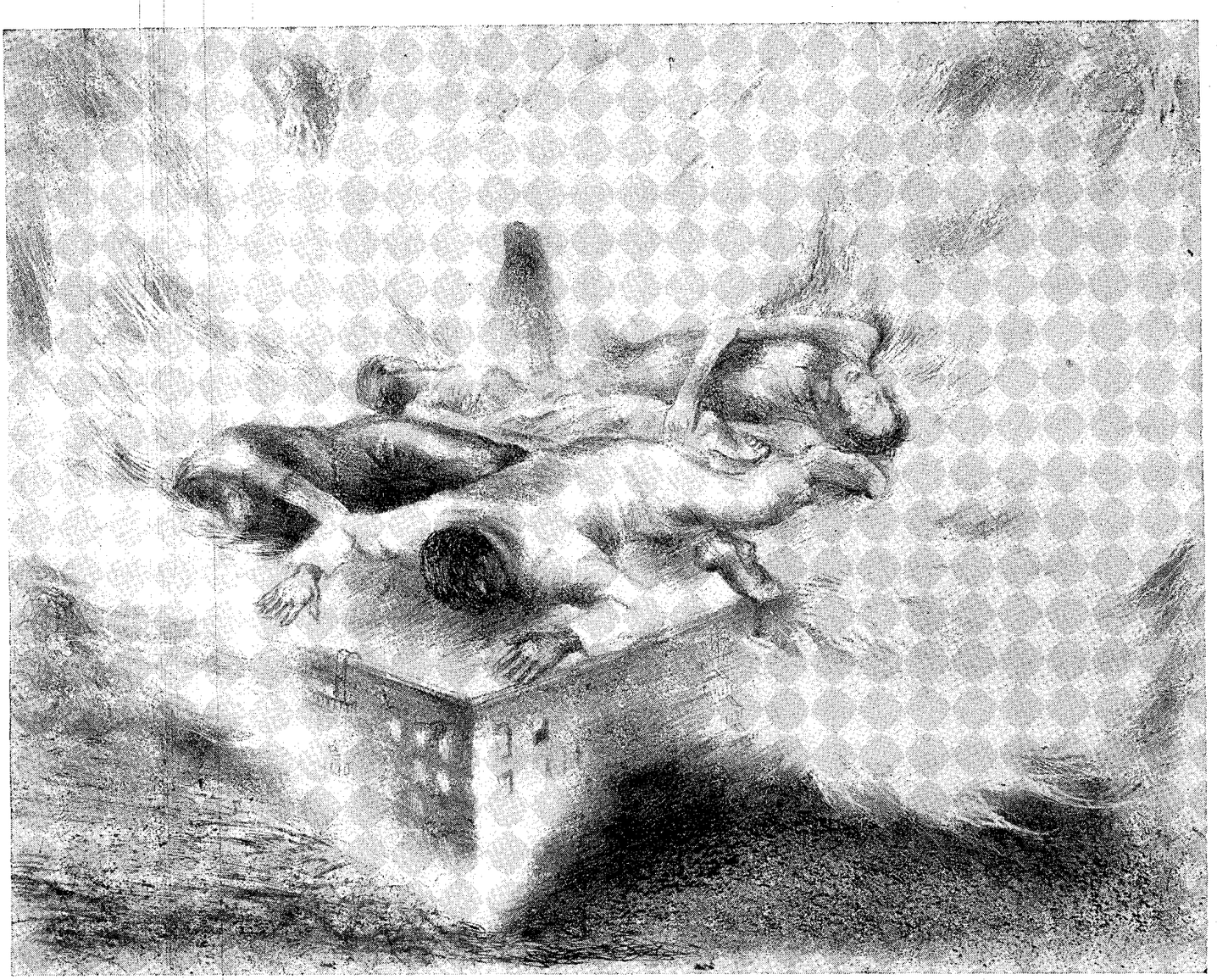

Sacrifice

Lithograph by Hyman Warsager

It must be obvious to every thinking person that if good environmental conditions are obtained only at the expense of a reduction of food-purchasing power . . . such advantages as accrue from good housing will be more than outweighed by nutritional depreciation and, as a consequence, cannot but have an adverse effect upon tuberculosis.

Many similar experiences could be cited from other English cities.* In these cases slum-dwelling families were actually moved into clean, modern homes only to find themselves worse off with respect to health than they were before.

The obvious moral of these experiences is that slum clearance and rehousing are not of themselves effective solutions of the health problems of the poor, and that the basic causes for the higher morbidity among slum dwellers must be sought in their poverty and not only in the homes in which they live. The fact that a map shows a slum area to be coincident with a high incidence of tuberculosis proves nothing except that the low-income groups who are prone to this and many other diseases are forced to live in the slums because that is where the rents are low. As Dr. Haven Emerson, public-health authority of Columbia University, put it, in a paper delivered at the Social Work Conference at Atlantic City on May 26, 1936:

Other things, such as housing, being equal, the general death rate, infant mortality, the tuberculosis and other respiratory disease rates rise with amazing consistency with each drop in the average annual family income.

When moving into newer, better housing takes a little more of the earnings for rent, two things happen among families at the daily wage, or hand-to-mouth level of existence: first, a reduction in the sum spent for food, and second, the taking in of extra persons for board or lodging to help meet the rent. The resultant undernourishment and overcrowding can be relied upon to offset any advantage presumed to come from the better building, and the sick and the death rates will rise elsewhere under such conditions as they were found by McGonigle to do in Stockton-on-Tees and in Glasgow.

The same reasoning will throw light on District Manager Dresser's other points. There is hardly a factor which he offers as proof of the causal relation between housing and crime, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, etc., which cannot be more adequately explained on the basis of insufficient income and other aspects of the economic social environment in which we live. To argue, for example, that juvenile delinquency is a product merely of the slum and that therefore it will be eliminated by slum clearance is to ignore such fundamental causal factors as the Hollywood gangster films, the sex magazines and tabloids, family and social maladjustments, and child labor. Would slum clearance eliminate these from the scene? Would better housing completely eliminate the economic force which drives working-class girls to prostitution? Of course not. These evils have deep social and economic roots, and a serious attack on them involves basic alterations in our whole social and economic system. The improvement of housing conditions is important, but it is only one aspect of a program which must cover a wide front. We have only to glance at the

* Report of Medical Officer of Health, City of Hammersmith, 1932. Minority Report on Housing Policy, City of Leeds, 1933. Health Reports for Glasgow, *et al.*

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Soviet Union to see this clearly. Housing in the U.S.S.R., in spite of great recent improvements, is still far from adequate, and slum dwellings still exist in Moscow, Leningrad, and other old cities. Yet crime, juvenile delinquency, and prostitution have practically ceased to be problems in the Soviet Union.

This is not to say that unsanitary, substandard housing does not have some harmful effect on health. Of course it has. Clean, airy, fireproof homes are certainly some of the essential attributes of decent living.

Consequently I am not for one moment implying that the fight for the clearance of slums and the building of new housing for workers be let up or abandoned. On the contrary, the housing conditions of the mass of American families, particularly as revealed by recent government surveys, are so shockingly wretched that it is both natural and necessary that the slums be demolished and that new decent homes rise in their place.

But out of this intense need and desire for better living conditions, all sorts of ineffective and misleading schemes have sprung to delude the masses in the past. The real value of a critical examination of housing measures which have actually been carried out (*actually,* not by theory or wish-fulfillment) is that it may enable us to avoid the inevitable pitfalls which lie in the path of such reforms.

History from the middle of the nineteenth century up to the very present is replete with examples of the way in which housing problems are frequently solved under capitalism. In *The Housing Question,* Frederick Engels writes:

> In reality the bourgeoisie has only *one* method of solving the housing question after its fashion—that is to say, of solving it in such a way that the solution continually reproduces the question anew. This method is called "Haussmann."

Engels points out that by "Haussmann" he does not mean merely the method of the Parisian city planner of that name who broke straight and broad avenues through the slum districts in order to make barricade fighting more difficult.

> By "Haussmann" I mean the practice which has now become general of making breaches in the working-class quarters of our big towns, and particularly in those which are centrally situated, quite apart from whether this is done from considerations of public health and for beautifying the town, or owing to the demand for big centrally located business premises, or owing to traffic requirements . . . etc. No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-praise from the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but they appear again immediately somewhere else and often in the immediate neighborhood.

Engels wrote this in 1873. In 1935 the Lavanburg Foundation made a study of Knickerbocker Village, a government-financed housing project which had replaced the notorious "lung block" on New York's lower East Side. The study showed that the rents in the new project were entirely out of the reach of the former occupants, most of whom simply moved into adjoining slum houses.

There is also the more reecnt case of Techwood Homes in Atlanta, the first federal project to be completed by the Housing Division of the P.W.A. last summer. Rents at Techwood are $7.39 per room per month ($5.58 plus $1.81 for heat and electricity). This rental is just about twice as much as most Atlanta families can afford. Consequently, it is no surprise to learn from Housing Division publicity releases that the fortunate occupants of this much-ballyhooed project consist largely of "store clerks, service men, salesmen, and small business operators."

The Housing Division does not tell us what happened to the several hundred Negro families who formerly occupied shacks on the site on which Techwood was built. We can, however, make a good guess on the basis of a survey made by Howard Whipple Green, Cleveland housing authority, of the P.W.A. Outhwaite project in that city. Mr. Green found that 84 percent of the families displaced by the new housing relocated within a radius of one mile of their former dwellings. Negro families, who were more numerous in the area, moved even shorter distances than the white families. No one will deny that this is slum clearance. But it is clear that, in the process, those in whose interests all this was presumably done were unceremoniously dumped into neighboring slums.

At this point many "housers" will object that they agree with all this, but that the Knickerbocker Village and Techwood cases I mention are exactly what their most recent schemes are designed to eliminate. After all, England did succeed in getting millions of low-rental dwellings built after the war. As for Stockton-on-Tees, that was an isolated phenomenon against which they will cite any number of cases showing that the new housing resulted in improved health and other benefits. Let us see.

Between 1919 and the present, about 1,400,000 dwellings were constructed in England, Wales, and Scotland, with more or less government help. A recent British Labor Party

Painting by Tschacbasov (American Artists' Congress Exhibition)

Penthouse

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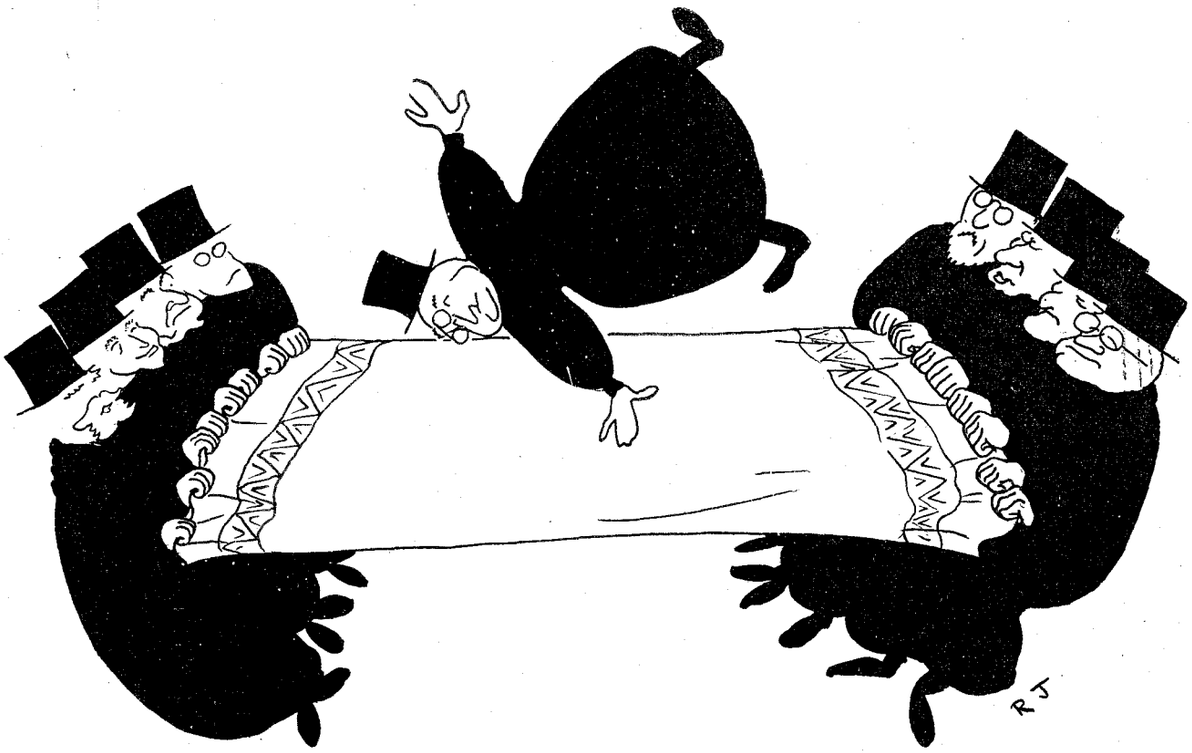

"Okay, Roberts, right side up it's constitutional, wrong side up it ain't!" Robert Joyce

pamphlet entitled *Up with the Houses—Down with the Slums* has the following to say about this record:

> Relatively this is a substantial achievement, but it has proved entirely insufficient. Not more than three quarters of these houses are available for letting, and even then the rents of the great majority are above what the average worker can afford to pay. A fair number are occupied by persons who do not ordinarily come within the "working-class" economic category, and the majority are occupied by only the better-paid workers, or by workers who have to pay more rent than they can afford. It is entirely proper that the better-paid worker should be provided for; but it is beyond dispute that the lower-paid worker has been very largely neglected.

That is the general picture. A study made by the Architects & Technicians' Organization of London states that "58 percent of the families for whom the London County Council estates were presumably intended could not take advantage of the new buildings." The A.T.O. estimates also that "only 12½ percent of all post-war government housing has been within the reach of most working-class families." These are the fruits of the English slum-clearance program: a great quantity of housing was provided by the middle income groups; builders and real-estate men made huge profits from the construction and sale of land; and the mass of workers got what they received in Engels's time: practically nothing. The fact that most workers of low income, that is to say, the slum dwellers, cannot afford to live in the new houses explains how it happens that claims of improved health in the new estate are often made. They simply are not talking about the same people. We might just as well point with pride to the better health conditions which prevail in the "lung block" area now that Knickerbocker Village has displaced the tubercular slum dwellers.

But even those few workers of low income who managed to get into the new estates found themselves to be not so well off. We have already cited the Stockton experience. The last report of the Medical Officer of Health for Manchester describes an investigation of five hundred families who were transferred from slum areas to city housing estates. "These rebates [rent subsidies—S.H.] have been most helpful to many families. At the same time it is impossible to deny the fact that nearly every family moved is living at some greater cost than before, after allowing for rebate. What they are getting for this extra cost may be worth it many times over, but if they cannot afford to pay for anything extra they have to make sacrifices, and it may not be possible to manage it."

THE political significance and the irony of the English housing experience lie in the fact that this reform was inaugurated under the slogan: "Homes for Heroes." The war-weary soldiers, disillusioned and in a mood for sweeping radical social changes, were permitted to have their housing program (at a good profit to the builders). The workers of Austria and Germany were likewise led to believe that their much-publicized model housing projects were actually "citadels of socialism." It was this very tendency to permit the so-called "workers'" housing schemes to become ends in themselves, separated from a broader revolutionary perspective, which deterred the workers of Europe from successfully defending in armed struggle with fascism those concessions they had won.

Shall we therefore give up all effort to eliminate the slums? Of course not. But when we fight for the elimination of slums and the construction of low-rental housing we must do so with a clear understanding of the facts and issues involved.

We must understand, in the first place, that slum clearance and housing alone will not cure the social evils which plague those who must dwell in blighted areas. An effective attack on the causes of tuberculosis, crime, and delinquency must involve the economic improvement of the living conditions of the lower income groups, and on a thoroughgoing correction of the social factors which also lie at the root of the so-called "slum" evils. The professional "housers" and reformers do not stress this point because to do so would take them from the safe realm of slum clearance into the uncomfortable arena of struggle for higher wages and adequate relief.

In the second place, we must realize that this emphasis on the theory that slums breed crime and disease and, conversely, that slum clearance and new housing will cure these ills, tends to divert us from fighting those very factors and forces which are really responsible for the slums and the conditions existing in them. Moreover, when the slum clearance and housing laws were passed and popular resentment had cooled off, it was often discovered that the wrong people had benefited or that the program had bogged down in the mire of legislation or constitutionality. It is this ancient process which explains how it is that, after New York had passed its first anti-slum law of 1867, and its Tenement House Law of 1901, and finally the 1929 Multiple Dwelling Law sponsored by the then Governor, Al Smith, the city can still point to two million persons living in "old-law" slum tenements, most of which are firetraps. Let us not forget that New York represents the advance guard in the housing field, and that its three famous laws were each widely hailed as the final "death blow" to the slum.

(Mr. Hill's second article on slum clearance will be published next week.)

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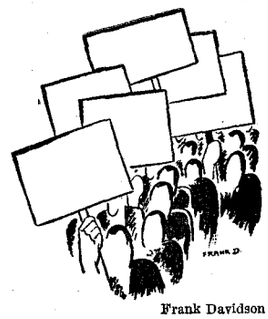
Parade



Frank Davidson

Gathering New Yorkers and their procession stir the heart and the mind of the passersby

By Norman Rosten

I think continually of those who were truly great.
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history—
—Born of the sun they traveled a short while towards the sun,
and left the vivid air signed with their honor.
—STEPHEN SPENDER.

I. Mobilization

In Manhattan the streets are long funnels for the wind
and today the marchers feel it raw coming through as they
wait for the advance: they hug buildings close as shadows.
The sky is cold granite the sidewalk is cold.

today it will snow for sure, said Mike,
because it is too windy for rain and
clouds stay frozen. See how my hands
are brittle almost like ice.

(I turn to her: Please could I put my cold hands
inside your fur coat how long
say, how long do we stand here waiting for signal?)

FORM RANKS ALL OUT

and into the street the shadows plunge like swimmers
in unison beautifully entering water. High
into the air thrust to sky like bursting flowers
the banners open, colors boldly streaming their ribbons.
Listen to the cheer
and the returned cheer! O the clean meeting of distances
through air; each sureness of earth is here:
the body's next step the certainty of voice.
(There are close to 8000 FORM RANKS
ALL OUT RANKS)

Now we start with noise: birds hear the sudden roar
they lose poise, spread like shot as we pass under the arc
with flags folding the wind.

Today it will snow—because of the clouds.
And I think (but Paul says it out loud:)

"Is there snow in Madrid do you think
and did my old overcoat get there yet?
The lining is still good in it and
I hope someone is wearing it today"

II. The Bystander

Who do not cheer are the dead men: they stare at us
they marvel at our footprints in the fading snow,
stand stone before the chants:
(he thinks:)
I am alone far back as childhood from this,
accidentally I am caught here in a crowd.
Spain is far—I live on East Seventy-eighth Street—I am
far away and I do not care—
(But the mind:!

:O I am outside of time as stars!
Will anything happen to me like this?
I cannot feel myself part of:
Why are they so glad marching:
Someone
help me, help me to sing perhaps,
will anyone help me?—:)

III. The March

After the first mile snow fell: down the tall valley
of Wall Street softly on our faces like children's tears
fell the snow

remember the young died remember the sudden bomb
remember the hurt nerve how it tortured before death
O remember from what hired gun

UNITE AGAINST WAR!

(capital letters against the sky!: take it, wind,
over continents! Make it electric at night, a big sign!)

MAKE MADRID THE TOMB OF FASCISM!

While a girl sprints from the line, solicits from traffic smiling
"Come on, mister, it's for yourself," clinking the donation box;
and in a passing car a man raises his hand from the wheel
the fist says Give it to them between the eyes
so they can feel it!

MADRID!—TOMB!—FASCISM!—

that's how they hear us twenty floors above the town:
voice goes that high see the burst of paper come down!
Volume in huge sound like waves fades returns
superbly in sheets of wind destroys distance: fades and
echoes back like thunder passed over but still strong. . .

MADRID—madrid—MADRID!

IV. At the Battery

This is an open area near the sea where wind enters
so fierce the gulls put all heroism in wings to ride level in it.
The snowflakes (I said they were tears of children)
are gone and now near evening over the water the sun
explodes clouds and fractures the clean straight sunlight
into ruined columns : the wrecked pavilions of sky
return our mind recall us fasten in memory
the dead defenders of Spain rigid above their ground:
the pride of Gothic is no more ruins to their base:
how stubborn men lie in death how fierce is held the
cold rifle as pride sets in on their skyward faces!

(where is your grief, reader of this poem!
where is your dream of children?
let me believe in you: where is the love
born in you . . .?)

O democracy all the brave
advance in deathless sons place high in tomorrow's winds
the flag! Truth, be known
expand widen centrifugal widen endlessly outward
outward as waves circular when stone buries
in water! Spread like sound, O song of freedom,
like sound from giant bells and we will toll them!
Turn, O axis, carry this truth too: let surfaces
reflect this sun like steel mirror: fixate the thrown fire
on darkness where sleepers are!

Man, be true! Earth, you are not dead yet!
I say this blood today shed will be the rain
drawing to full height your new race
and the brave alone shall greet them!!

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The Liberal Critics and W. H. Auden

The author argues that a number of important things have gone unsaid, while others that have been said are erroneous

By Horace Gregory

WITHIN the past month and a half, several American critics have expressed annoyance and disappointment in the work of the young Left movement in England. The occasion was the publication of two new books[1] by Wystan Hugh Auden, whose verve and alacrity in the writing of social satire are generally conceded to be representative of a fresh and vigorous intelligence in contemporary poetry. Under the title of "The Oxford Boys Becalmed," Mr. Wilson in the *New Republic* [Feb. 24] writes:

> Auden and his associates are at a loss as to what to do next. In some ways they appear to be retrograding. . . . Thus Auden, whose voice we knew and liked, disconcerts us by falling into the accents of Housman, or Yeats, or the palest of the later Eliot.

And Mr. Troy in the *Nation* [March 27], under the title "Revolution by Poetic Justice," says:

> But his satire is strongest on the purely negative side. . . . It is clearer to what things the poet is opposed than to what things he gives allegiance. . . . In Yeats's phrase, Mr. Auden gives the impression of quarreling with his neighbors without having made sure that everything is perfectly all right at home. . . . It is understandable enough why the churchgoing Communist has found something distinctly suspect in the centrifugal quality of the communism emanating from this verse . . . the personal love lyrics in this volume possess a distinction of line and surface that is all too rare in our time. But its connection with the attitudes elsewhere expressed in his work is either too general or too remote to be established without considerable sophistry.

Even the reviewer for the NEW MASSES [Feb. 23] devoted the first quarter of his review to dismay concerning the "obscurity" of Auden's verse—when he could have set his mind at rest by reading one chapter of Stephen Spender's *The Destructive Element* or a few pages of Babette Deutsch's careful exposition in *This Modern Poetry*. The second quarter of his review was given over to the discovery of one obvious misprint and two grammatical errors, one of which might well have disturbed an unwary reader, while the other existed solely in the reviewer's mind. (And here I think it is well to remember that mere grammarians encounter considerable difficulty with Shakespeare's text—and that an unimaginative reader is likely to go insane if he attempts to apply the rules of A. E. Housman's verse to the syntax of Gerard Manley Hopkins's poetry).

I am still at a loss to know exactly what these three writers expected to find in Auden's recent books. Only Mr. Wilson reminded himself that Auden had just turned thirty, and that he and his associates "are remarkable at that age for having been able to say so well something which had not been said before at all." Yet he assumes that in these brief few years "they appear to be retrograding," which seems fantastic if we remember that the same idiom that has been so characteristic of Auden's early poetics enters into the new lyrics and the play—and that all are written with variations on the same themes. We may be impatient for the arrival of Auden's middle age, but that time, with its failures or successes, is still ahead of us. At this moment we can expect no more than the work of an able and precocious poet whose imagination is possessed by the importance of Freud's emphasis upon childhood memories—and these include the association of public-school-and-Oxford adolescence.

There seems to be general agreement among Auden's critics that he has recently fallen under the influence of A. E. Housman and has in fact deserted Hopkins for him—but that influence so far as I can see is scarcely more than the adoption of elegiac verse forms and attitudes which existed in English poetry long before *The Shropshire Lad* appeared. One might as well insist that Auden's use of "Locksley Hall" in the earlier *Poems* proved a retrogression to the influence of Tennyson, or again, that the beautiful poem VII in *On This Island,* which reiterates an experiment in verse made by Sir Philip Sidney nearly four hundred years ago, is a betrayal of Hopkins and the "new" movement in poetry. Even the most casual reader of Auden's anthology, *The Poet's Tongue,* should know that he has read widely and with profit, and it should not surprise us that his verse forms are selected from what may seem to be unlikely sources. For anyone interested in the minutiæ of such influences, I recommend a reading of *The Poet's Tongue,* to which may be added *The Ingoldsby Legends, The English Struwwelpeter,* "Casey Jones," or "Franky and Johnny" as well as *The Shropshire Lad.* The depth of Housman's influence may be measured by this contrast:

Housman:

> Think no more; tis only thinking
> Lays lads underground.

On This Island:

> Underneath the abject willow[2]
> Lover, sulk no more;
> Act from thought should quickly follow:
> What is thinking for?

So far, the persistent literary influences upon his work have been Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Kafka, Eliot, Hopkins, Proust, and W. B. Yeats. And these influences have been no mystery to those who have read C. Day Lewis's *A Hope For Poetry* and Stephen Spender's *The Destructive Element.* Auden himself has listed those writers who have shaped his work in several of his poems.

While his present critics have exaggerated the impression left by Housman on his new poetry, I believe they have also underestimated the deeper impress made by the memory of D. H. Lawrence upon his imagination. This was the Lawrence of whom Auden wrote that he "was brought down by smut-hounds," and that he "revealed the sensations hidden by shame." The freedom and confidence to be gained by the writer in the direct use of the poetic imagination were Lawrence's great gifts to the generation that followed him. *The Ascent of F 6* shows us again how profoundly the younger poet accepted the teachings of the Lawrentian æsthetic. The very theme of *Sons and Lovers* is reënacted on the stage; and at the end of the play, as in the novel, there is the same "drift toward death" that Lawrence knew so well and explained so

J. E. Heliker

[1] *The Ascent of F 6,* by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood. *On This Island,* by W. H. Auden, Random House, 1937.

[2] See George Wither's sonnet No. 4 from *Fair Virtue* and Suckling's poem "Why So Pale and Wan, Fond Lover?"

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eloquently in a letter to Edward Garnett. The mother of the play's hero (Michael Ransom) dominates the action of the play; she is the unnamed cause of Ransom's homosexuality; it is she who compels him to climb the mountain, F 6, for the glory of British imperialism. And at the play's end, it is she who is the demon haunting the summit of F 6, and she who is the image of death to European man, and when at last Ransom faces her, he dies.

To say all this is not to deny that *The Ascent of F 6* betrays signs of immaturity in social experience as well as in dramatic craftsmanship. Its social satire (which at its best is conscious parody of the kind of hero-worship we have witnessed in this country at the time of Lindbergh's flight) is made to seem incidental to the actual development of the play, and is therefore ineffectual. Briefly, the play is second-rate Isherwood and third-rate Auden. Its prose is far inferior to Isherwood's recent short story in *New Writing,* and there is no speech in the play which equals the force and brilliance of Auden's monologue "Alfred," which was also recently published in *New Writing* No. 2.

If the play could be isolated as the very latest and only example of Auden's work, —if his "Alfred" were unwritten and *On This Island* had been published five years ago, Mr. Troy's objections to negative satire could be justified by the flimsy texture of the writing in *F 6.* But Mr. Troy has based his argument upon the poems in *On This Island,* and when he says that its satire is negative, I take him to mean that he can find no heroes and no better world which might serve to balance Auden's indictment of capitalist society. If this is what he means, then he has ignored completely the "Epilogue" of Auden's latest book, which lists for all to read the names of Nansen, Schweitzer, Gorki, Freud, and Groddeck, and this list is followed by reference to Lawrence, Kafka, and Proust—and the U.S.S.R. is plainly cited in the reference to Gorki. I doubt if any poet could be more explicit. Meanwhile, Mr. Troy, like many another liberal, moves toward the extreme leftist position in his attempt to evaluate the new poetry; he is not content to read significance in what Mr. Wilson calls the list of "the lonely, the neurotic, the futile" which Auden so brilliantly describes. Nor do I agree that the "personal" lyrics in *On This Island* are so remote from the satire in the same volume that one must resort to sophistry to keep them within the ranges of the same poetic attitude. I wonder what Mr. Troy would say if he were confronted with Robert Burns's "Tam o' Shanter," "The Jolly Beggars," and "The Silver Tassie"—would he find the idiom of "The Silver Tassie" so far removed from that of the satire in "The Jolly Beggars" and the humor of "Tam o' Shanter" that it would require the art of sophistry to place all three within the same environment? Would he be willing to take *his* place in the company of those who now join Burns Societies and who complacently discredit Burns's political beliefs in favor of the dubious sentiment in "Highland Mary?" I think not—but he exhibits the same evidence of schizophrenia in reading Auden's verse. For some strange reason, he fails to recognize here, as in the earlier poems, the persistence of the mountain-valley imagery which enters the "personal" lyrics and satire alike. In *On This Island,* one finds a notable version of its cumulative meaning in poem VII:

So many, doubtful, perished in the mountains
Climbing up crags to get a view of islands;
So many, fearful, took with them their sorrow
Which stayed them when they reached unhappy cities;
So many, careless, dived and drowned in water;
So many, wretched, would not leave their valleys.

It is the sorrow: shall it melt? Ah, water
Would gush, flush, green these mountains and these valleys
And we rebuild our cities, not dream of islands.

Here is the same valley "fatal where furnaces burn," and the same valley over which the "Journal of an Airman" was written, and which was the battlefield of *"Paid on Both Sides";* the mountains which loom above it are visible in *"The Orators"* as well as in *F6* —and here in poem VII we are warned to look no longer inward, "not dream of islands" and that here we must prepare to rebuild our cities from the ruins. The map is so clearly drawn that it must demand some degree of willful preoccupation to remain blind to it. And though the map is less distinctly a view of English landscape than a fusion of Marxian and Freudian symbols in geographical design, it is familiar territory to all who have read Auden's verse, and we are prepared for poem VII by poem VI:

O what is that sound which so thrills the ear
Down in the valley drumming, drumming?
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
The soldiers coming.

. . . .

O is it the parson they want with white hair;
Is it a parson, is it, is it?
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,
Without a visit.

. . . .

O where are you going? stay with me here!
Were the vows you swore me deceiving,
deceiving?
No, I promised to love you, dear,
But I must be leaving.

. . . .

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,
O it's the gate where they're turning, turning;
Their feet are heavy on the floor
And their eyes are burning.

. . . .

Since the poem appeared in *New Verse* at the very moment when there was prolonged discussion of recruiting problems in England, its immediate intention is unmistakable, yet the poem extends its usefulness beyond the moment, for it contains that valuable ambiguity which relates all poetry worthy of the name to the cultural memory of the people.

As I read them, it is clear to me that the thirty-one lyrics of *On This Island* are concerned with the varieties of alternate demands toward action and the nostalgic backward-pulling forces (sometimes adolescent, sometimes infantile) of introspection—and here the meaning of "island" may be said to carry with it the association of a man standing alone in public-school-boy-Oxford-post-war-England. This is quite another thing from being "at a

Almé

"He lives only for the 'Herald Tribune' and Mr. Lippmann."

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loss as to what to do next." As in Lawrence's verse, so here, "all the customs your society has chosen/ Harden themselves into the unbreakable/ Habits of death" and the *Dance of Death* motif, which is so clearly reflected in the satirical verse, enters the poems of "personal" conflict. And again, as in Lawrence's poetry, the animal symbols are given form:

Fish in the unruffled lakes
The swarming colours wear,
Swans in the winter air
A white perfection have,
And the great lion walks
Through his innocent grove;
Lion, fish, and swan
Act and are gone
Upon Time's toppling wave.

We till shadowed days are done,
We must weep and sing
Duty's conscious wrong,
The devil in the clock,
The Goodness carefully worn
For atonement or for luck;
We must lose our loves,
On each beast and bird that moves
Turn an envious look.

Superficially this poem is in immediate debt to the later Yeats, quite as other poems pay homage to Marvel, Sidney, and Shakespeare's sixty-sixth sonnet, but its deeper debt lies with the hold that the memory of Lawrence exerts upon it. At this depth, there is always the awareness of living in a shadowed world where:

We haven't the time—it's been such a rush—
Except to attend to our own little push:
The teacher setting examinations,
The journalist writing his falsifications,

The poet reciting to Lady Diana
While the footmen whisper "Have a banana"
The judge enforcing the obsolete law,
The banker making the loan for war,

The expert designing the long-range gun
To exterminate everyone under the sun,
Would like to get out but can only mutter;—
"What can I do? It's my bread and butter!"

Reading these poems, I find it impossible to accept the dichotomies which have so alarmed Mr. Troy that he fears "the churchgoing Communist" had better stay away from Auden and his kind. Nor am I convinced (with Mr. Wilson) that the verse in *On This Island* reveals the symptoms of poetic retrogression: both poems VII and XXVII (which I have quoted) would be difficult to parallel in the work of any other living poet. If these are proof of "retrogression," I wish that other contemporary poets would join Auden's company. And I believe that the NEW MASSES reviewer, thinking more of Housman than of Auden, needlessly frightened himself with delusions of "obscurity."

I believe it is possible to admire much that Auden has written and yet remain fully aware of a precocity that is always threatened with disaster; the poems themselves repeat the note of warning: horror and death are always near. He conveys the impression that he is the kind of poet whose future lies immediately behind him, and with each book it is as though he had warned us of disaster for the last time. Yet, so far, he has belied his promises of being too clever for his own good: the fine choruses of *The Dog Beneath the Skin* followed swiftly upon the dubiously Cole Porterish breakneck skill of *The Dance of Death*, and some of the best of his more recent lyrics were written after *The Ascent of F6*. The peculiar value of his work to Marxian criticism lies in the clarity of his own position: he has always represented the attitudes of a young man who has used the advantages of British middle-class culture to uncover its neuroticism and decay. The events of the successful proletarian revolution which culminated in the building of the U.S.S.R. bear about the same relationship to him as the French Revolution to the Byron of *Childe Harold*. He has yet to write his *Manfred* and *Don Juan*—and there is even greater possibility that his work will exhibit the failures, the terror, the beauty, the precision, the wit that marked Thomas Lovell Beddoes's memorable *Death's Jest Book*. But this last, of course, is mere conjecture based upon his creation of a poetic personality not unlike that of Beddoes, the poet who was both Englishman and European, who revolted against his own class and the British empire, who shared the same intellectual training that guided the young Karl Marx, and whose personal life revealed the same evidence of psychic terror so frequently discovered in Auden's poetry. Meanwhile, *On This Island* will continue to confuse those critics who have been trained to regard the poetic syntax of Housman, Millay, and the Georgian poets as a final test of poetic excellence; it will continue to bewilder (and perhaps infuriate) those who believe in an imaginary status quo, a curiously academic world, remote from human action and events—to these Auden will always appear in the disguise of an impertinent schoolboy. As for the rest (and here I include those who believe that literature reflects the significant character of its time), a half dozen poems in *On This Island* will assure them that poetry has not lost its power to perceive the realities of the time in which we live.

A Letter to Wystan Hugh Auden

April, 1937

FRIGHTENING A CHILD

It's not wise to go walking in the ruin.
Lest they should fall the cracked walls are held with chain,
all the lintels are covered with willow shoots
and the stones have shifted in the winter rain.
Leave the gate unclimbed and with untampered seal,
there are much better places to take the air.
The broken mosaics are best left unseen,
the robin's eggs in the shattered clock unclaimed.

Others have climbed to the tower's top to wish,
and kiss the face carved there unobliterate,
and fallen or been robbed or drowned the same day.
The rocks that line the moat are sharper than steel
and keep the bones that plunged to calling voices.
Men have crawled moaning from that ditch with flayed hands,
or died there helpless in the gathering ice.
The arches are all awry that once held taut.

You've a future before you that's still unseen,
let glories of exploration go unclaimed.
You can break some far more profitable seal
than keeps out vagrants and keeps in wind and rain.
There's only trouble waiting in the ruin,
you're better off playing in the sun and air,
or making wild salads out of bracken shoots,
or weaving violets in an endless chain.

ADVISING AN ADULT

no wish to leave unseen
no day to pass unclaimed
the unobliterate seal
the steel rain

voices in the old ruin
flayed hands seen in the air
ice black on the green shoots
the taut chain

faithfully
KENNETH REXROTH.

★ ★ ★

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Trotsky Investigates Himself

EVER since the first Moscow trial, Leon Trotsky has been begging for an impartial commission to investigate his side of the case. Six weeks ago, the Socialist Front of Lawyers in Mexico appointed three leading federal judges to go over any evidence Trotsky might care to submit. Trotsky haughtily rejected this offer. He wanted another kind of commission altogether, and now he has it.

A little band of Americans has journeyed down to Trotsky's home in Coyoacan to "investigate" the charges of ternor, sabotage, and murder overwhelmingly proved at the Moscow trials. The group describes itself as impartial. According to its chairman, Prof. John Dewey, "it was necessary to secure the services, as inquiry commissioners, of people whose reputation for integrity cannot be challenged and who have no partisan commitments in this historic controversy." Dr. Dewey is convinced that the little band which is using him as a shield actually consists of such people, thereby revealing that even a famous philosopher may be extremely naïve in matters of this kind. Has Dr. Dewey studied the records of the so-called inquiry commissioners? Does he really know the people who skulk behind his back while he hands them a clean bill of health as having "no partisan commitments"? Consider these impartial investigators one by one:

Albert Goldman, Chicago lawyer, was expelled from the Communist Party several years ago for Trotskyism. Since then, he has been an active Trotskyite politician and a regular contributor to *Socialist Action,* a Trotskyite journal issued in Chicago. Speaking to the New York *Times* correspondent in Mexico last week, Goldman revealed: (1) the "impartial" commission will hear only Trotsky's side of the case; (2) the commissioners do not accept the charges against Trotsky and are favorably disposed to him; (3) Trotsky will not submit all his correspondence.

Benjamin Stolberg is a free-lance journalist who has specialized in selling to the capitalist press pseudo-information regarding American radicals. His impartiality may be gleaned from a piece he published in the New York *Times* of August 29, 1925, entitled "Bolshevism in the United States." In this he sneered at the foreign-born character of the Communist movement; attributed alleged Communist plots in this country to the sinister influence of Zinoviev, whom he is now trying to defend at Coyoacan; accused the Communist International of keeping a resident agent in the United States; published names in the capitalist press in a manner which earned him in labor circles the epithet "stool-pigeon"; corrected the Department of Justice as to the amount of Moscow gold which American Communists were supposed to receive; assisted the Red-baiters in their attacks on William Z. Foster; and in general carried on anti-Communist, anti-Soviet propaganda of the lowest order. Since then, Stolberg has further developed his "impartiality" by persistent attacks in the *Nation,* the *Times,* and elsewhere upon Communists, combined with an equally persistent defense of Trotsky. His recent reviews of books, first by Strachey, then by Trotsky, were both partisan polemics.

Suzanne LaFollette is a journalist strongly under Stolberg's influence. She has published a number of articles and reviews attacking the Communists and the Soviet Union. Here she revealed herself clearly as Trotsky's disciple. Sample of her impartiality from the *Nation* of September 26, 1936: "Ever since Stalin came to power, Communist strategy has been dominated by the obsession of 'socialism in one country' and hence, of course, revolution nowhere else."

Otto Rühle is another active Trotskyite. This German author lives in Mexico City. He is the father-in-law of Fritz Bach, a notorious Trotskyite, expelled from the Communist Party together with Diego Rivera in 1929 for refusing to leave his post in the Portes Gil government when it was persecuting workers and peasants. Rühle gets his line from Bach and is as impartial on the Moscow trials as Rivera.

Carleton Beals is a free-lance journalist who has been hostile to the Soviet Union for the past seven years. Carlo Tresca, Anarcho-Syndicalist, is the only member of the little band who has had any connection at all with the labor movement; he could hardly claim to have "no partisan commitments in this historic controversy." As for Charles Rumford Walker, publicity man for the little band, his record in the historic controversy is very clear indeed. He is an active Trotskyite propagandist, allied with the Trotskyite Dunne brothers in Minneapolis.

Thus, with the solitary exception of Dr. Dewey, every member of the "impartial" commission of inquiry turns out to be an active partisan intent upon whitewashing Trotsky. Nor does Dr. Dewey himself enter upon the so-called investigation unprejudiced. It is well known that on questions regarding the Soviet Union he is influenced by the Trotskyites Max Eastman and Sidney Hook, his former students. He revealed his emotional bias when he told the *Times* correspondent in Mexico that "Trotsky has been sentenced to death in Moscow." A less prejudiced person would at least get the facts straight: Trotsky has not been tried in Moscow and has not been sentenced.

The whole farce boils down to this: Leon Trotsky is being "investigated" by a group of his own followers. They start with a conviction that he is right. They will ask questions which he will prepare. He will submit such of his papers as do not incriminate him. In short, Trotsky will try himself and declare himself not guilty. This cannot alter the overwhelming evidence of his crimes presented by the thirty-three defendants at the Moscow trials.

Warning!

FRIENDS of Spanish democracy should note the existence of an organization referred to as the "American Committee for Spanish Relief" and also as the "Non-Partisan" committee, with headquarters at the Vanderbilt Hotel in New York. The North American Committee for the Aid of Spanish Democracy has issued a statement pointing out that various Franco sympathizers are associated with this venture, notably its *treasurer.* The moral is obvious.

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READERS' FORUM

Congressman Teigan on the McReynolds bill—Dr. Holmes replies to Mr. Schappes—A Soviet film

● In a recent issue you stated that there were twelve votes against the McReynolds neutrality bill in the House. As a matter of fact, there were thirteen, as I voted against the bill.

I was present on the floor and voted "No," but due to the fact that the clerk did not hear me, I was recorded as not voting. If you will look in the *Congressional Record* for the following day, I think you will find that I recorded my vote, which was corrected in the *Record*.

If possible, I would appreciate a correction in the NEW MASSES, as I am proud of my stand against this measure.

HENRY G. TEIGAN.

From Musician Hollister

V. Verlinsky
Amkino Corporation
Dear Mr. Verlinsky:

● I cannot thank you enough for calling my attention to the new Soviet film, *Beethoven Concerto*, which has been playing at the Cameo Theatre in New York.

My enthusiasm on seeing it is so great that I am losing no time in writing you my personal appreciation of this delightful film, and to express my hope that every musician in New York will take the opportunity to see it. My only regret is that I could not stay to see it through a second time, for the privilege of seeing (and of *hearing!*) these delightful and talented children (child prodigies, under the system of exploitation and envious competition that prevails outside of the Soviet Union, are by no means always "delightful"!) is thoroughly rewarding—and enjoyed once, demands repetition. . . .

I think that none of my fellow musicians in New York should miss—can *afford* to miss—this film, *not only* because they will enjoy the extraordinary musical talents of these children—and certainly the violin playing of the two children Taimov and Vasiliev in the brief fragment of the Bach "Chaconne" and the first movement of the Beethoven Concerto is extraordinary in its fullthroated tone, its musical vitality and expression, its technical assurance and confident style; *not only* because it affords an opportunity to hear a brand-new *cadenza* for the Beethoven Concerto, actually composed, I understand, by the remarkable young boy-violinist-composer whom we see in the act of composing it on the screen—a cadenza musically worthy of the great Concerto and the pen of a mature composer; but most important of all, because it will afford them a glimpse into a new world of music—a world freer, healthier and saner than ours, in which musicians are not the victims of a bitter, constant, and too often a losing struggle for mere existence—but where study, work, and musical achievement can be a joyous thing, a true "labor of love."

CARROLL HOLLISTER.

Dr. Holmes Rebuts

● Dear Mr. Schappes: I want to thank you for your very truly interesting and helpful "Open Letter" [Reader's Forum, Apr. 13] on the matters in controversy which you specify. I am only sorry that your letter seems to be a bit arbitrary, and to resent my having any ideas of my own. I do not see how anybody can be arbitrary about the Moscow trials, the features of which are so incredible either way you look at it, and the facts of which are still so obscure and uncertain. At any rate, I have to state frankly that, friendly as I have always been to the Soviet republic, I have never been willing to surrender my mind to their control, and I certainly do not and will not believe that a thing is right just because Moscow does it. There is all too much in your letter which seems to imply that this latter is your attitude, and I regret it. I think our first duty, as regards Russia and every other problem of human life, is to maintain the integrity of our own minds and the independence of our own thought. Nor does criticism necessarily imply enmity! It is sheer childishness to think anything of this sort. The truest friend is most frequently the one who exercises rigorously the honest criticism of an open and sympathetic mind. I still find it impossible or at least difficult, to understand the attitude of men who bind themselves to Moscow the way Roman Catholics bind themselves to the Vatican. May I commend to you a statement made by Norman Thomas as reported in the New York *Herald Tribune* this morning [Apr. 1] in the story of his sailing for Europe. Mr. Thomas says: "I am friendly to the Soviet, but I don't believe I have to take it on blind faith that everything done in Russia is done by God. It is one of the curses of this world that because one supports a given cause or country, he is expected to accept on faith every act in its name. Often the best service is to be critical."

In your references to Judas and Benedict Arnold and Mussolini, it seems to me you have the whole thing twisted inside out. You've got the cart before the horse. I can't understand why you should so muddle the issue involved. You say, "Does the fact that Benedict Arnold betrayed the American Revolution discredit the Washington regime or the American Revolution?" Of course not—but what has that got to do with the issue between us? If you want to use this illustration and apply it to my position, it would run as follows: what if Washington and Jefferson and Madison, some years after the American Revolution was successful, suddenly plotted against the American government and undertook to get in touch with the English king to surrender the American colonies again to the crown? That is the real parallel to what may have happened in Russia. And if this thing happened, don't you think it would discredit the American Revolution and the men who put that revolution through?

You object to my statement that "a government which can do such things, whether the men be guilty or not, is not far removed from the Nazis of Germany." I can only answer your objection by repeating what I have said. Granted that the men were traitors, no government but an utterly barbaric government shoots traitors in time of peace. There may be some argument for shooting traitors in wartime, though I don't believe in capital punishment under any circumstances, as the Soviets themselves didn't believe in the beginning. But in peace time, no civilized government ever shoots a traitor. Only a few weeks ago here in this country a naval officer was convicted of treason for selling military secrets to Japan, and he was given, if I remember rightly, four years in prison. Recall the Dreyfus case—terrible indeed, and yet the government did not shoot Dreyfus within a few hours after his conviction. What Moscow did was sheer savagery, and those of who believe in the Soviet adventure may well weep that Stalin should thus be willing, for any reason, to classify himself with Hitler in this treatment of his enemies.

Ruth Gikow

Your closing suggestion that the Moscow trial is a "great contribution to the cause of peace," leaves me simply paralyzed. When a man gets into such a state of mind that he can make a statement of this kind, there is nothing to be said. In your devotion to Russia, you have just made your mind a piece of mush, and such minds I am not interested in.

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES.

Mr. Schappes Replies

● Dear Sir: A question of fact in your reply leads me to continue this correspondence despite your wish.

Shifting your ground from your position in your symposium statement, you misstate the facts when you assert that the Soviet government executed men who were found guilty of treason in peace-time. That is not true. The men who were found guilty only of treason (Radek and Sokolnikov) were given ten-year sentences, the highest sentence short of death in the Soviet Union. In this respect, the Soviet Union was following out the same principle practiced by the United States court that sentenced Lieutenant Farnsworth to from four to twelve years' imprisonment for selling military secrets to the Japanese government.

Those who were executed were found guilty of wrecking and sabotage that had caused the death of scores of Soviet citizens, as well as, in some cases, of treason. It is for this reason that they were shot. Is it "sheer savagery" to execute criminals who have caused the violent death of Soviet citizens? In the case of the Zinoviev-Kamenev group, execution followed upon their being found guilty of having been directly involved in the organization of the assassination of Kirov. Let me remind you that the first time Kamenev and Zinoviev were tried, they were indicted for and found guilty of merely political responsibility for the death of Kirov, and were then given only ten-year sentences. In other words, I am impelled to the conclusion that Soviet justice is more discriminating, *if one knows the facts*, than your hasty generalization would suggest. Hitler, on June 30, 1934, ordered out his gangsters and shot Roehm and his other "palace opponents" in the night. Mussolini, when an Ethiopian hurled a bomb that wounded an Italian general in Ethiopia, saw to it that about two thousand Ethiopians were slaughtered. The Soviet Union, with all due process of law, indicted criminals, and punished the ones found guilty "in strictest measure even," fitting the punishment to the crime. In the face of all this, your objection to capital punishment is not quite relevant.

Not merely irrelevant, but illogical, however, is your reassertion that "whether the men be guilty or not" the Stalin government is "utterly barbaric." *If you were convinced the convicted were guilty, would you still consider the Soviet government utterly barbaric?* It is inconceivable that you should. Since you do not seem to be very well acquainted with the facts, may I suggest that you study the copious reports of the trial that are now available [see "The Descent to Hell," Review and Comment, issue of Apr. 13] in order to give the Soviet Union a hearing on its side of the case? Otherwise it seems to me that you will continue to do, as you have done in the past, little more than cloak your ignorance of fact under honorific pretensions to independence of mind.

MORRIS U. SCHAPPES.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Ralph Bates's new novel—Others by Josephine Johnson and C. Day Lewis—The Far East and Mexico

THE owners of the sponge fisheries of the Greek Archipelago are not squeamishly particular about the antecedents of the men they hire: "murderers, wreckers, bandits, anyone...." The Greek entrepreneurs can well afford to be lenient, for they pay the fugitive fishermen only one-fifteenth of the wholesale price on the Skarpa market. The maladjusted, the hag-ridden, the conscience-harried—those crushed by some cruel whim of fate or relentlessly driven by an inner dæmon—these make up the embittered derelicts who dive for sponges along the submerged reefs, fully cognizant of their exploitation but too defeated or too apathetic to do anything about it. Defeat is deep in their bowels, for they lack the clear aim and understanding needed to pilot one through the debris of a dying world.

One of the most clearly realized portions of this new novel * by the author of *The Olive Field,* who is now fighting with the Loyalist forces in Spain, has to do with the childhood of Robert Freeth, who seeks beauty in the forbidden "the-etter." A wondering, dreaming boy, he has on one dark night, in a frenzy of terror, stamped to death a hedgehog and is tortured by remorse. He shrinks from the probable course of his life: ". . . Put up with it, marry a piece and settle down, take a house on a hill, have a good Sunday suit." He escapes humdrum factory life only to murder, in the same blind frenzy, a French prostitute because she has infected him with a disease which his sensitive mind has always feared. He finds his way to the sponge islands along with Skinner, a sea captain who accidentally lost his first ship, and who has sunk to the practice of sinking ancient tubs for the benefit of the owners who collect the insurance.

Another of the fishers is James Legge, less than a poet but something more than a work-a-day plodder, who accuses himself of having murdered two women he loved: one a suicide, and the other dying in childbirth. He tells another sponger, a Jew who has found it impossible to make a living for himself and family as a barber in London and who resorted to petty swindling which brought about his exile from England, about himself:

> "I used to feel sometime that if only I could find one single thing that would resist doubt, remain solid and firm under me, I could build a life for myself, even if it were only an archipelago in a sea of confusion and unbelief. More than anything I wanted to be a poet, yet whatever I wrote was only a reminiscence of other poets and I could not build on my work. Sometimes my verses seemed real, then they would fall apart in my hands like unglued fretwork. This was an image from Rimbaud, or that an attitude from Yeats. . . . "

And the barber answers: "You never had anything to write about in those days, Jimmy."

But there is still nothing more tangible than flabby sponges to lay hold of, and the dæmons have followed their wards to the archipelago. Some are wraiths of the spirit, others are projections of more solid police officers. The derelicts move inevitably toward the polaris of their doom, and in the prologue, which is actually the conclusion of the novel, another ship has been wrecked for insurance, and the tide washes up three bodies—sponge fishers. There have been seven of them, but the reader can be sure of the identity of only one: Robert Freeth, who has been stabbed in the back in a quarrel with another sponger. They had been fighting to bring a ship through the gale, but failed when victory seemed near.

The novel derives its affirmative note from the dogged struggle of Skinner (and, to a lesser degree, his comrades) to bring the rusty hull to safety. Skinner, before the tragedy that set him adrift, had been proud of his seacraft. In more than one place the potentialities of these creatures that once were men, are vividly suggested, and the implicit indictment of a society which wastes and warps such material is a telling one.

JACK CONROY.

Small Town Idyl, Plus

JORDANSTOWN, *by Josephine Johnson. Simon & Schuster. $2. April Book Union choice.*

IF only as a declaration of faith, coming at a time when such revolutionary declarations are no longer in fashion, *Jordanstown* would be notable. For this simple tale of a small-town editor's attempt to organize the unemployed and the official brutality which he encounters is a passionate assault on our social order. Set in a homespun American town, and filled with the native pride of regionalism, *Jordanstown* is one more sign that revolutionary beliefs are entering the veins of American literature.

A. Ajay

But neither the sincerity nor the faith of the author should blind us to its defects as a novel. It is true that she has avoided the monotony of details which have become the common stock of the genre and are hardly identified with any single novel—a welcome change from those catalogues of despair and recipes for hope into which revolutionary literature has tended to fall. Yet in rejecting the platitudes of realism, Josephine Johnson has embraced the platitudes of romanticism, blurring the outlines of characters and events in a rhetoric of sentiment. Decisions are wrapped in soliloquies about time and eternity; conversations have an archaic nobility; social forces are cast in the symbolism of winds; and the pages are studded with aphorisms about life and death and harvests and destiny. Instead of a growth of consciousness as the characters are impelled to new acts, there is merely a change of scenes, an intensification of mood, and a rapturous sense of fraternity. At the end, Allen Craig, the class-conscious editor, is moved by the vision of a new society, and the battle of the winds is over: "Let the great winds blow over Jordanstown,—the terrible, driving winds of life, the winds of self-desire and hate and passion and need! He had felt the south wind, the wind without salt, at last."

The actual narrative is almost negligible, for instead of venturing into a fresh world of moral and social conflicts, Josephine Johnson has written what appears to be a lyrical summary of all other labor novels, so that one feels as though he were reading an entire genre rather than a novel. In Allen Craig are combined the qualities of the organizer and the intellectual convert. Fired with the hope of a better world, he uses a small inheritance to buy the *Jordanstown Voice* and turns it into a workers' paper; under his direction, the unemployed build a hall and celebrate its completion with a parade. In the meantime, the commercial bureaucracy of the town whips up a savage hysteria, smashes Allen's printing press, burns the hall, and shoots up the parade. There is the usual mock trial, sentences, mood of defeatism, and resurgence of hope as the dispersed workers collect their forces again. One other character deserves mention: that is Dave, the inspirational leader and moral conscience of the workers, who is shot by a sheriff at the parade; and his death, one is made to feel, is a form of martyrdom which caps his messianic fervor. The pattern is familiar enough. And if Josephine Johnson manages somewhat to conceal the formula by keeping the mechanics of the plot down to a bare subsistence level—fortunately the hall is not built brick by brick and we do not witness the joining of each worker—still she cannot

* *Rainbow Fish,* by Ralph Bates. E. P. Dutton & Co. $2.

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escape its creative restrictions. For it is just these omitted details which are the foundation of the novel, which nourish and explain the behavior of the characters. It is only natural that the author's talents should have been spent on verbal decorations.

Why then, it might be asked, have the reviewers rushed into a stampede of praise for the rich, sensitive writing of *Jordanstown?* I think it is because this novel has a split personality. And the reviewers, for the most part, have seized upon its idyllic qualities, giving little attention to its gaunt and provocative subject except to lament its having been chosen at all. Thus Josephine Johnson, in respect to her own development, is faced with alternative cures for her creative split. Need one remind her that the prescription of the reviewers has already produced such masterpieces as *Gone with the Wind* and *Anthony Adverse.*

WILLIAM PHILLIPS.

Guide to Imperialism

THE FAR EAST IN WORLD POLITICS, *by G. F. Hudson. Oxford University Press.* $3.

MR. HUDSON understands imperialist nations and exploiting classes very well, and exploited classes not at all. His account of the shameless penetration into China by the great European nations during the past century is compact, shrewdly reasoned, and generally accurate. His summary of mass movements in China during the same period is hostile to workers and peasants, angled in favor of Chiang Kai-shek's brand of law and order, unwittingly short-sighted with respect to the true meaning of the great T'ai P'ing rebellion of the nineteenth century, and generally inaccurate.

No subsequent trespass on Chinese sovereignty was as brazen and inexcusable as the trespass which first pried open her doors to capitalist trade. The Opium War of 1840 saw the English navy force China to buy English opium, though Chinese law had for generations forbidden its use. This initial success was the signal for the other formidable carriers of western civilization, France, Germany, czarist Russia, and the United States, to fling themselves upon the profitable and prostrate body of China and disgorge from it a stream of extra-territorial rights, tariff concessions, monopoly spheres, leased zones, and vast profits. They fought among themselves over division of the spoils. They divided into factions, levied small wars against each other on Chinese soil, and there generated many of the frictions that led to the World War. Mr. Hudson presents their schemes, alliances, policies, with a shrewd and revealing clarity.

What they did to China they would have done to Japan had not the islanders speedily transformed themselves into a predatory nation. The why and how of this transformation are questions germane to the mechanism of the Japanese ruling class. As with imperialist nations, Mr. Hudson is at home among the ruling classes and his analysis of the combine

Soriano

between the dispossessed *samurai* and the neglected emperor against the shogunate is the most brilliant passage in his book.

His treatment of China's internal affairs is another story. He fails to see the T'ai P'ing upheaval as a great agrarian uprising, crushed finally by the troops of Britain's General Gordon, and a precursor to Sun Yat-sen's revolutions and the Chinese Soviets. He fails to give Galen and Borodin their due in the Kuomintang revolution of the middle twenties. He falsely accuses Borodin of seeking a war between China and England and of stirring up foreign pogroms. Readers of Sheean's *Personal History* will remember how Borodin complained that one reason for his inability to establish a soviet in Hankow was the hostile presence of foreign warships on the Yangtse. To say that Borodin deliberately planned a war between China and England is to ascribe to him a suicidal impulse of which he was manifestly incapable. Mr. Hudson viciously regards the peasant movements that fashioned the Soviets in the mountains of Kiangsi and Fukien as the work of a disorganized rabble. He is prejudiced and inaccurate whenever he makes reference to China's exploited millions.

Mr. Hudson expects a war between the United States and Japan and correctly appraises the present huge American Navy with its unprecedented cruising radius as designed for offensive operations in the western Pacific.

Thus, part of his book is sound, part is twisted out of truthful shape. As a guide to imperialist aggressions in the Far East, it can be warmly recommended. Its interpretations of China should be energetically ignored.

LEO GURKO.

First Novel

THE FRIENDLY TREE, *by Cecil Day Lewis. Harper & Bros.* $2.50.

WHEN a first novel is written by a man who is not only an outstanding poet but a highly intelligent analyst of the social function of poetry, it is inevitable that the critic should approach it with preconceptions. No matter how desirable it may be to judge a book on its own objectives, it is hypocrisy to pretend that this novel can be read without awareness of C. Day Lewis's avowed political point of view. It is this which makes *The Friendly Tree* a disconcerting book, because it is perhaps more exclusively an exercise in pure lyricism than anything which has appeared for some time.

To be sure, the hero, Steve, springs from a family of intellectual miners, is unemployed, embittered, highly loquacious about his Communist convictions. But the book is quite simply his love story, all the ramifications of his love for Anna, the kind of girl almost lost to fiction, virginal, naïve, dreaming of knights on white chargers, wholly centered on romantic love. Then there are a brother and sister, their friends—Huxley characters full of epigrams and inner hollowness, rather farfetchedly symbolic of the charms of the decadent past. One of Mr. Lewis's critical theories is that socialist interpretation should never be dragged in as ornament or facade, but his occasional symbolisms are seldom inherent in his theme. The judgments are too one-sided: for example, there is indignation because the decadents live on unearned income, but the author and Steve are only bemused by the equal, if more sympathetic, uselessness of Anna. And then, Steve is so young that his social concepts carry little weight at best. One almost believes his friend's statement that he is a rebel only because he has not found his work: let him get a job and settle down, etc. Hoary as the argument is, in this case it seems true, for at the end of the book, after three years of marriage, Steve is still preoccupied, despite a vague background of "political activities," with his relations to Anna, the seductive female version of the past. So that even when these loves are frustrated by italicized economic causes, the emotional basis of the book makes them into asides: must not knights in armor expect to have their way blocked by dragons?

In his essay, *A Hope for Poetry,* Lewis explained modern poetic obscurity by the poet's need for homogeneity in a hopelessly complex world. The poet, he says, is reduced by this necessity to writing for his friends. *The Friendly Tree* is far from obscure, but its deliberate narrowness of canvas suggests a similar search for the manageable.

MARJORIE BRACE.

A Poet in Prison

LOOK THROUGH THE BARS, *by Ernst Toller. Farrar & Rinehart.* $2.75.

THESE prison letters, and the three brief books of war and prison poems, have a special importance aside from the autobiographic documents they provide. They are not candid or full; one feels the stamp of the censor, that incredible governor of the fortress of Niedershonenfeld, under whose vigilance Toller suffered five years imprisonment after the destruction of the Bavarian revolution. But what does reveal itself in these letters to artists, workers, scientists, his wife, is a special kind of psychology that prison life, and the defeat of a revolution, intensified. We are not distant from this feeling, this perpetual wrench and dislocation of belief and hope which Toller experienced. These letters, these

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thoughts, escaping the prison walls and the censorship, are moving, actual, real. They are different from Rosa Luxembourg's letters, (though, in time, she too wished she were a bird), and different from Vanzetti's letters (though not because Vanzetti was less an artist).

Thus, to Stefan Zweig, Toller writes of "the inner perfection of the prisoner." To Romain Rolland: "Oh, who in this chaos will listen to my voice?", then dreaming of the men of the future to whom humanity is "a reality greater than all the realities of politics." And this revealing passage: "As a politician I act as if men as individuals, as groups performing various functions, as exponents of economics, as exponents of power, and as if certain facts, were ultimately real. As an artist I see how questionable these ultimate realities are." Imagine an Independent Socialist in a Germany where Social Democrats are strangling the revolution, an idealist in human relations facing political factionalism even inside the cell-blocks, a romantic artist who fought for his ideas with the conviction they could demand anything but the sacrifice of his conscience and intellect, a man of extreme nerves, tenderness, spirit, and courage, and a picture emerges of the political artist of our time. Toller has endured what American writers may have to endure. He has endured a Germany where "the revolution is defeated. Barbarism, moral and spiritual rottenness, lies, hypocrisy, and profiteering are triumphant." Out of those five years came four plays which had perhaps as much to do with the past decade of the German stage as any other art. And perhaps this, too, is a product of that time:

"If belief be often disappointed, as it must be, it changes into enmity and hatred of humanity. I can imagine fighters for whom it would not be a matter of crucial importance whether they had that belief or no; they fight under the power of an idea—the idea of co-operation for conscious self-development. . . . Is not the destiny of European man to be this kind of fighter, this heroic kind?"

ALFRED HAYES.

An Archaic Novel

THE BRIDAL CANOPY, *by S. J. Agnon. Translated from the Hebrew by I. M. Lask. Doubleday, Doran & Co.* $3.

SUPPOSEDLY a product of a Hebrew renaissance in Palestine, Agnon's novel might in effect have been written at any time within the past hundred years, in any of the tiny centers of "enlightenment" in Lithuania or Poland, to be read by small scattered coteries of Hebrew enthusiasts. It is completely divorced from the "new life." A Hebraist of the sixties of the last century reading this book today would have no inkling of any revived activity and development in Hebrew literature. He would feel it to be contemporary, both in form and content, with the other works of his day.

The Bridal Canopy takes place in the early nineteenth century. It deals with the wanderings of the Chassid, Reb Hassid of Brod, who leaves his home and family to fulfill the holy commandment of bringing his daughters "under the canopy," that is, of marrying them off. Being unable to supply them with the requisite dowries, he needs must depend upon the charity of his fellow Jews to make possible the fulfillment of the commandment.

Together with Reb Nuta, his waggoner, he travels the length and breadth of Galicia accepting the alms which his fellow Jews recognize to be a sacred duty. For this was no ordinary charity. It was observance of a holy commandment which brought credit to both donor and receiver in the eyes of the Lord. It is not, however, just the wanderings and adventures of Reb Yudel and his faithful waggoner that make up the substance of the novel. It is the countless tales and legends, stories within stories, exchanged by Reb Yudel and Reb Nuta to illustrate points in their animated arguments, that constitute the major part of the book. Similarly, each village and inn they stop at affords an opportunity to hear like tales from their hosts and to swap their own in return.

These stories and legends are taken from the wealth of colorful Chassidic folk-tales and myths which the author has accumulated over years of study and research. They are woven into a delightful pattern that presents an illuminating, though one-sided, picture of the period, which can scarce be gotten from more formal studies of Chassidism.

In the end, Reb Yudel's faith is justified. He secures the bridegrooms for his daughters. Once again the Lord has provided for the faithful. And the book closes on a note of confidence and trust in the providence of the Blessed be He.

Unfortunately, in our own day, the faith of a Reb Yudel no longer sustains. The providence of the Lord is unavailing in the face of life's actualities. Chassidism itself was the revolt of the Jewish masses against the monopoly of the Talmudic and rabbinic aristocracy. The latter claimed that only through constant study of the law was loyalty and faith in God demonstrated. Only through such study was a place secured in the world to come. The Chassidim felt that joyous fulfillment of the simple daily commandments, and the interpretations of their Rebbes would find equal favor in the eyes of the Lord. For it was quite evident that humble working folk could not devote their days to holy study. That was the privilege of the wealthy and leisure classes alone. As years went by, the essence of Chassidism was corrupted by un-

Arthur Getz

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scrupulous leaders who took advantage of the simple faith of their followers and feathered their own nests.

In the *Bridal Canopy,* however, we have little indication of the pressing social problems of the period. It is a romanticization of the past by one who apparently still accepts the values and concepts of the period he describes. The form of the novel is equally archaic. It is quite definitely picaresque after the fashion of *Don Quixote* or *Gil Blas.* The style and language conform to the structure of the novel. There is little of the style of modern Hebrew in it. It retains the flavor of the medieval legends and rabbinical agadas and homilies. In its nostalgia, in its idealization of Chassidism, the novel is a direct continuation of the artificially preserved Hebrew literature of the past. The English reader is yet to be convinced by his Zionist friends of the vitality of modern Hebrew literature. Agnon fails to do so.

A. ARTHUR KALLAN.

Coney Island Folk

LOW COMPANY, *by Daniel Fuchs. Vanguard Press.* $2.50.

THIS novel has humor of the kind which distinguished Fuchs's earlier books—humor of an almost macabre sort—but its distinction lies in the compassion with which Fuchs writes. His characters are a low lot, and their story a rough one, but he gives them significance in spite of their vices and frustrations.

To Neptune Beach, a place in Brooklyn, come folk of lesser means, crowding from the city for a day at the shore. The story concerns the merchants along a boardwalk who are anxious to serve the pleasure seekers. Only incidentally do the vacationists figure, and then as an offstage mob parading the boardwalk or flocking into the soda parlor. Mr. Spitzbergen, owner of Ann's soda parlor, regards the rainy morning with distaste, and moans at its effect on business. Most of the action of the forty-eight hours of the story begins or ends at Ann's, and through the place troop a cheery crew: Shubunka, the operator of a string of two-dollar brothels, and an extensive renter of Mr. Spitzbergen's apartments. Moe Karty, an earnest gambler on the races and an accountant gone wrong. Moe's knock-kneed, worried wife. Herbert Lurie, who runs a dress shop, who has tried marriage and its substitutes frequently and is anxious to try again. Mme. Pavlovna, the corsetière who remembers her past in the capitals of Europe as she eats her breakfast at Ann's. And the personnel at Ann's: Dorothy, the cashier, who thinks of marrying Mr. Lurie. The new girl who is afraid of being pinched for the shortage in the cash register. Shorty, the middle-aged soda jerker who fails to understand what Mme. Pavlovna means by platonic love, and whose lesson costs him three dollars and indigestion, and costs Mme. Pavlovna one black-chiffon negligée.

But this brief account of the characters gives no idea of the rare quality Fuchs

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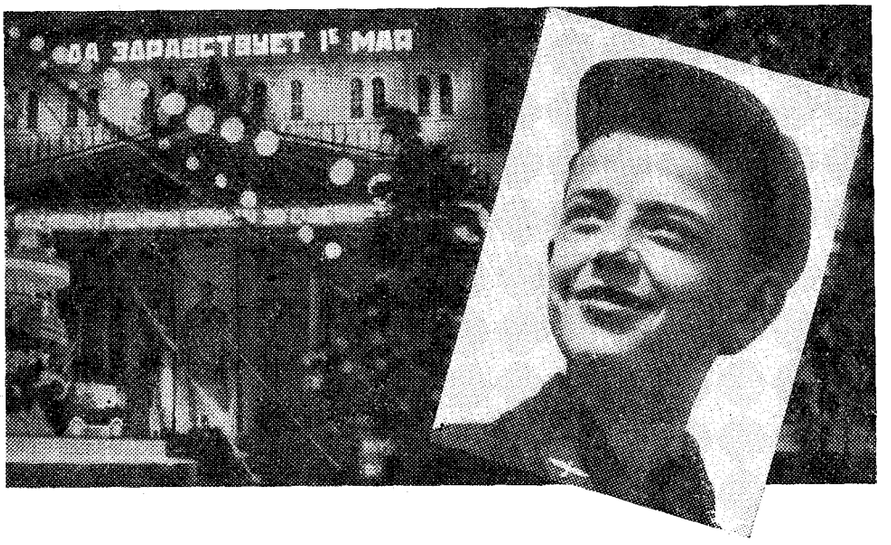

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achieves in this novel. His dialogue is excellent. His account of a day at the track with Moe Karty and Arthur is one of the best racing reports in contemporary fiction.

JERRE MANGIONE.

Brief Review

FORAYS AND REBUTTALS, *by Bernard De Voto. Little, Brown, and Company.* $3.

Bernard De Voto, editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature,* and occupant of *Harper's* Easy Chair, is a tough-minded critic: lashing out furiously at Big Business, at reformers, at sentimentalists, social and literary theorists, politicians, revolutionists, Babbits, and the young intellectuals, he manages to refute almost every interpreter of American life and literature. Since so many of these interpretations have been merely pedantic researches, or sheer apologetics, or personal fulfillments, we should be grateful to De Voto for trying to salvage the face of America from beauticians like George Seldes and dyspeptic moralists like Paul Elmer More. As against such crusaders as Harold Stearns who have taken to the covered wagon in search of the *real* America west of the Alleghenies, one wonders whether De Voto's cry that there is no *real* America, there is only a series of events and a mass of individuals, as not almost preferable.

Answering Edmund Wilson, who complained that De Voto had no system, no program, he boasted of his lack of programs and defined himself as an empiricist. But in his straining toward "pure" empiricism, De Voto has converted what is at best a method of testing ideas into a world-philosophy. As an advocate of progress toward a better world—"slow" progress, because any quickening of the tempo would interfere with natural processes—he rests his faith in the ultimate triumph of man's inner nobility. Similarly, in opposing any critical theory of the frontier or of Mark Twain as a speculative luxury, De Voto is committed to a view of the world as a vast carnival of facts and events which can be indexed or dramatized but never completely or satisfactorily explained. This is not to deny his critical intelligence in specific essays; many of his attacks on the extremes of the literary Left as well as the Right are in the interests of consistency and sanity; but De Voto is essentially a debunker. And professional debunking is a self-consuming activity which leads to a cynical denial of all values and all hope of knowing the truth. Will the sun rise tomorrow?—surely Mr. De Voto knows that it is impossible to prove absolutely that it will. W. P.

★

Recently Recommended Books

Spain in Arms, 1937, by Anna Louise Strong. $1; paper 25c.
Bread and Wine, by Ignazio Silone. Harper. $2.50.
Away From It All, by Cedric Belfrage. Simon & Schuster. $3.
The Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Center: A Verbatim Report, published by the People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R. Bookniga. $1.
Tsushima, by A. Novikoff Priboy. Knopf. $3.50.
Pie in the Sky, by Arthur Calder-Marshall. Scribner's. $2.50.
Angels in Undress, by Mark Benney. Random House. $2.50.
From Bryan to Stalin, by William Z. Foster. International. $2.50.
Zero Hour, by Richard Freund. Oxford. $1.25.
You Must Break Out Sometimes and Other Stories, by T. O. Beachcroft. Harper. $2.
Forward from Liberalism, by Stephen Spender. Random House. $2.
Let Me Live, by Angelo Herndon. Random House. March Book Union Selection. $2.50.
The Old Bunch, by Meyer Levin. Viking. $2.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

A revolutionary comedy on Broadway—What's wrong with phonograph records—Two art shows

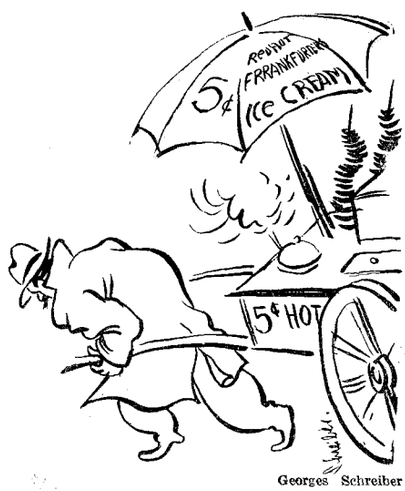
SPRING came up like thunder along Broadway this week with the appearance of Victor Wolfson's grand comedy *Excursion.* And, despite the fact that it was loudly echoed by the reviewers of the capitalist press, the thunder was definitely on the left. This play is a joyous, tingling, revolutionary escapade. If you're within traveling distance of Times Square, get your tickets now, for it looks like a smash hit.

The story, briefly, is of the scheduled last voyage of a Coney Island excursion steamer due for the scrap heap because she no longer earns her keep. Captain Obediah Rich, who has sailed her to and fro through the Narrows for thirty years, is doubly woebegone because he realizes that he has been cheating his passengers for more than a generation—ferrying them away mornings to the land of heart's desire, and then returning them evenings to the squalor and cruelty of their workaday lives. He confides his woe to his brother Jonathan, a rash old salt who has come along for the farewell voyage, and the latter proposes the hair-raising expedient of sailing away with the boat-load to a Carib isle where life is fine and free and hard by the seacoast of Utopia. Captain Obediah hesitates, then takes the bait. The passengers, after some discussion backward and forward, by backward and forward elements, ratify the decision, and the S.S. *Happiness* noses happily out past the Hook. Huh, you say; pretty escapist stuff. Or is it just symbolic? Well, it isn't exactly either; the story doesn't end quite there. Playwright Wolfson lets capitalist nature take her course, and she takes it just as she would if such a hare-brained effort were actually attempted. I'm not going to tell you how, but you should be able to guess if you're properly grounded in the Marxist conception of the relation of the state to property. And this is what drives home the political lesson of the play.

Most of the action takes place among the passengers on deck, and they are such an assortment as you'd expect to find on a Coney Island boat, full of the still-born dreams, winsomeness, and resolutely held aspirations of the plain folk of our time. There is a whole deck-load of them, yet most of them stand out as fully developed and memorable characters. There are so many excellent performances by the acting company that mention of a few would be strictly invidious. Director Worthington Miner's handling of pace and ensemble seems to outshine the best of his recent work, and designer G. E. Calthrop has done tricks with the settings which brought spontaneous applause for their heightening of realistic effect. The producer is John C. Wilson, who was associated with Noel Coward in the production of *Tonight at 8:30,* and his presentation of this play adds an eagle's feather to a cap previously fledged with peacock.

Ward Morehouse, who for years has been theatrical reporter for the New York *Sun,* has turned his hand to the writing of a play of his own, *Miss Quis,* with by no means negligible results. It is the story of the efforts of a housemaid (Peggy Wood) in a small southern community, who is left a fortune by an employer, to wipe out the welter of corruption and stupidity into which the town of Fancy Gap has fallen. Having been housemaid-about-town, she knows the unsavory doings of practically everybody, as well as the chinks in their armor, and she starts out bravely, with the aid of the local gambler (James Rennie), to put things to rights. Into this *Main Street*ish milieu a murder trial enters to carry on somehow ineptly the tradition of theatrics, and in broad outline the play continues to the traditional happy ending with the gambler and Miss Liz Quis slated to live happily ever after. But apart from this theatric banality, Mr. Morehouse has probed sharply into small-town social and economic relations, and there is much in the play that has the savor both of authentic Americana and sound characterization. The material is basically worth while, and you get the feeling that around this general plot the author could build a solid novel. As it is, the relative overplaying of plot tricks and underplaying of character development and social scene lend a regrettably artificial tone to material that is essentially authentic. Miss Wood and Mr. Rennie, however, bring enough vitality to the goings-on to make it worth your while.

Hitch Your Wagon, which is about a famous actor and his engagement to the daughter of a designing mama, succeeds in being funny for most of its length, and in its incidental material, in being real and human as well. But it rather loses headway as it proceeds, which is not exactly what the doctor ordered. At the same time, playwright Bernard Schoenfeld has obviously been around,



Georges Schreiber

and has a sharp eye for the foibles of great actors and of bourgeois domestic relations, and a keen ear for the flow of human speech. whether it be of professional masters of ceremonies or of West End Avenue furriers. The results are frequently delightful, especially when entrusted to such competent performers as George Curzon, Dennie Moore, and Joseph Greenwald.

Good news comes from the direction of *Marching Song,* which is going ahead with a new lease on life as a result of having been taken over on a coöperative basis by the acting company. Actors' Equity Association granted the request of the company and the Theatre Union for this special dispensation, being convinced that this was a genuine cooperative effort, and not some producer's dodge to avoid Equity pay scales. The company has vigorously attacked the problem of keeping the show going, and, since this is the first large-scale coöperative enterprise of its kind, it is expected that extra support will be forthcoming from those organizations that would like to see a coöperative enterprise succeed. This reappearance of *Marching Song* as theatrical news provides an opening for one comment that the play deserved and which was more or less lost in the original discussions that surrounded it because it was about a sit-down strike in auto. This concerns the humor in the play. It's there and it crackles, and when it isn't crackling, it's ranging generously in such matters as the lines of Woodrow Wilson Rosenbloom, perhaps the most effective character in the play.

ALEXANDER TAYLOR.

PHONOGRAPH MUSIC

THE surest sign that an unhealthy boom is budding is the sprouting of a sizable group of new recording concerns. In the popular fields, the labels Master and Variety were introduced on April 1 by Irving Mills, the Broadway song publisher and manager whose activities have occasionally been commented upon in this column. In serious music one may find the Decca Odeon and Parlophone series, Musicraft, Friends of Recorded Music, and several semi-private ventures, as well as the return of the Brunswick gold label repressings of German and French Polydor.

There have been many requests for information about the working conditions in record factories in this country. It would not be within the province of this column to comment upon them were it not for the fact that the conditions are directly reflected in the quality of the finished record. So many criticisms have been made by record reviewers about the surfaces of certain records, the residue that is allowed to remain in the grooves of lami-

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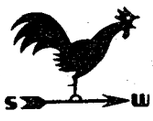

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nated disks, bad wearing qualities, etc., that it is high time that the companies realize that sweatshop conditions among the factory pressmen and mixers are primarily to blame.

The manufacture of phonograph disks is still a highly skilled and specialized job. One man working an automatic or semi-automatic press can turn out fewer than a hundred records per hour; novices find it difficult to complete more than fifty; the most skilled can average around ninety—and then only under a terrific speed-up. Factory conditions are of necessity oppressive because of the tremendous heat, the distasteful smell of the hot shellac composition, and the constant tension of the workers—tension caused by the necessity for the absolutely correct placing on the press of the master plates, the correct labeling, taking the record from the press at precisely the right temperature, and the avoidance of breakage. It takes years of training to produce high-speed pressmen, as the phonograph trust in the U.S.S.R., where the hourly record production rate per man is still about forty, has learned to its sorrow.

That the R.C.A.-Victor Co. puts out the most consistently good record, both in surface and wearing qualities, very few people in the industry will deny. It is the only factory in the country that has been unionized by the United Electrical & Radio Workers, a C.I.O. affiliate, and its working conditions are considered model in comparison with its competitors.

Up until 1933, Columbia records were universally considered the finest. They are made by a patented laminated process whereby the outer surfaces are made of a high quality hard and smooth composition, separated from a cheap, gritty core by linings of paper. It takes longer to make them than to make standard disks, but the material itself is considerably cheaper because scrap can be used in the core without affecting the quality of the surface. The assets of the Columbia Graphophone Co. were acquired in 1931 by a large radio concern which soon went bankrupt and sold them in 1934 to the American Record Company, makers of Brunswick, Vocalion, and Melotone records. The reasons for the deterioration of Columbia records in the past three years is closely linked to the activities of the American Record Co. and its factory methods.

An affiliate of the American Record Co., the Scranton Button Co., manufactured all the various A.R.C. disks in its Pennsylvania factory until 1934. Its employees were strongly organized in a national union of moulded products workers, and conditions there were at least tolerable. The head of the American Record Co., a despot of the old school, disliked dealing with unions, and upon the acquisition of the Columbia factory in Bridgeport, Conn., transferred all his record manufacturing to the latter, where, despite a Socialist mayor, he was promised he would have no trouble with unions.

Although the old Columbia factory was non-union, its working conditions were remarkable in view of the fact that the company

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had been under constant financial strain. Even in 1932, the worst year in the history of the phonograph industry, the plant manager had refused to cut the highly efficient working force, and bitterly fought the wage cuts instituted by the harassed company. As a result, wages there were higher than at the unionized Scranton plant of the American Record Co.

The first thing the new owners did was to fire the plant manager and practically the entire staff of Columbia workers, replacing them with unskilled local labor. For two years the plant was in a turmoil. A former high official of the A.R.C. told me that valuable shellac and other materials essential to record composition repeatedly disappeared from the factory, and that there was an enormous labor turnover. The same official stated that the factory was consistently cited by the Connecticut Labor Board for violations of the state minimum-wage and working-hour regulations. The surfaces of the non-laminated disks became noisier, while the grooves of the laminated records became filled with residue because of improper mixing and faulty handling of the presses. Average pressmen's salaries were around sixteen dollars a week.

This factory is now turning out more than a million records a month, and its product is still not consistent. The workers are unorganized, but with the success of the U.E.R.W. in the General Electric and other Bridgeport plants, it is unlikely they will remain so for very long.

The former Columbia plant manager is now supervisor of the Decca branch factory in Bridgeport and the main plant in New York. Decca business is booming, with both plants occasionally working on three shifts. Piece work is the prevailing system of pay here, as elsewhere in the industry, and the automatic presses require less exertion than those in the R.C.A. and Columbia factories. But the wages are far from high and the men are not organized.

The only other sizable record factory in the country is the independent Clark plant in Newark, which does a large amount of electrical transcription pressing on acetate disks and the pressing for Musicraft. We have no information as to the labor conditions there.

Since our last article on chiseling in the recording studios, a change has come over the various firms. Partly as a result of the NEW MASSES disclosures, Decca has put into all its contracts with orchestras a clause guaranteeing that Musicians' Union regulations would be strictly observed in all recording. Count Basie's orchestra was given a contract at a figure almost three times as great as that given him in his original agreement, while Andy Kirk's orchestra now receives approximately seven times as much.

The entrance into the field of the two new Irving Mills labels has been a great boon to record artists. Orchestras are now receiving more money than at any time since 1927, when radio decimated the industry, while individual musicians in bands are frequently receiving

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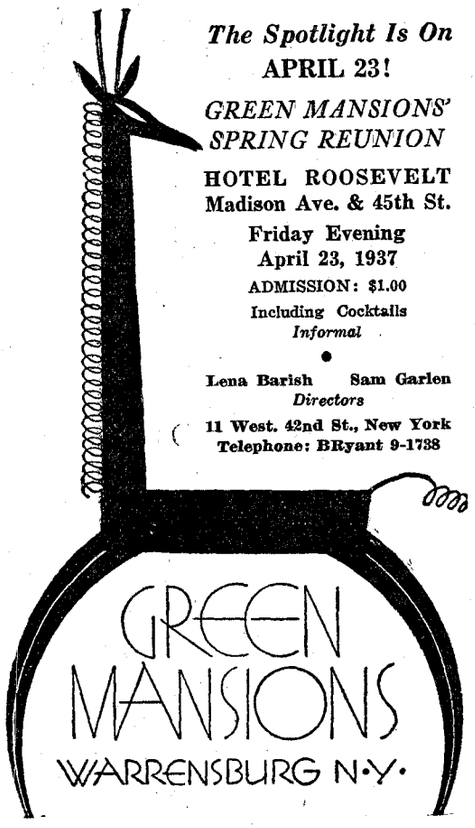

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HENRY JOHNSON.

THE FINE ARTS

MAN'S struggle against inhospitable nature and against industrial exploitation is the main theme of Harry Gottlieb's new show at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York. The sharp clash of deep black on stark white in lithograph and gouache dramatizes the life of Pennsylvania coal miners. Here the stoop of Millet's gleaners is transcribed into the angular industrial rhythm of men and women gleaning bootleg coal in bitter November dusk. This poignant theme is treated again in oil, the grimy figures gauntly illumined under a cold, blue sky.

Gottlieb is a painter in transition. His two early paintings reveal a young artist abroad under Utrillo's lyric influence. Later American landscapes are chiefly Catskill, but even there the painter was impelled to see man's work in relation to his background. He painted the decaying industrial section around lower Kingston, where sagging clapboard houses teeter on the hills and rotting barges, iridescent with rancid oil, clutter the canal. Later, in New York, the artist's compositions changed from static contemplation of nature's slow movement to the dynamic struggle of man against evil environment.

Today, Gottlieb is president of the New York section of the Artists' Union. His practical activity and his art are not yet fully fused into a new definitive style, but his work has gained immensely from participation in the organized struggles of the artists. Such canvases as *Coal Pickers, Workers,* and *In the Hospital* hold promise of an entirely new goal.

Thirty-nine artists in search of new forms have opened an exhibition in the Squibb Galleries in New York. Judged by the hundreds of people who thronged the preview, abstract art has become a vital issue in the U.S.A. The first works of cubism imported from France over twenty years ago left no impress on the main current of American art. Yet steadily for the last ten years, applied arts and interior decoration derived from that movement have been popularized, due, no doubt, to their close relationship to American skyscraper architecture. It now remains to be seen if abstract art will more deeply affect our painting. Certainly the recent and belated importation of surrealism exhausted its drive in the dressing of department-store windows.

But no one can deny that the whole movement in plastic art since the turn of the century has been consistently away from representational painting. For all practical purposes, the pictorial conquest of the visual world begun in the Renaissance was accomplished in the time of Cézanne.

For this reason, the appearance of so many young, capable, and articulate artists in the abstract field is significant. The exhibition reveals that within the formula of abstract art, there are as many personal variations as in realistic art. In fact, there is everything from

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design verging on commercial illustration to serious analysis of form and explosive expressions of temperament. For the most part, these new painters derive from the latter aspects of abstract art and not from early cubism. There is no dividing line between this type of abstract art and abstract surrealism.

The tradition comes through Picasso's latter phases, from Mondrian, Helion, and even from Kandinsky. Among the well-known abstract painters exhibiting are Balcomb Green, Ilya Bolotowsky, Byron Browne, Albert Swinden, George L. K. Morris, Paul Kelpe, Vaclav Vytlacil, George McNeil, Frederick J. Whiteman, and Carl Holtz. Whether they speak in the fluent idiom of Picasso or in the vivid color of the Expressionists, these artists are seriously concerned with the æsthetic problems of painting.

CHARMION VON WIEGAND.

★

Forthcoming Broadcasts

(Times given are Eastern Standard, but all programs listed are on coast-to-coast hookups)

Debate. Columbia U. vs. Oxford U. on "Government Control of Munition Manufactures," Sat., Apr. 17, 4 p.m., Columbia.

Music. Bizet's Carmen; a Met. Opera broadcast from Cleveland, Sat., Apr. 17, 2 p.m., N.BC. red.

"Women's and Children's Rights." Another dramatization in "Let Freedom Ring" series sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education, Mon., Apr. 19, 10:30 p.m., Columbia.

Peace Forum. "Town meeting of the air" to discuss "How can America avoid war?" Thurs., Apr. 22, 9:30 p.m., N.B.C. blue.

Problems Before Congress. A Representative will review them Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. and a Senator Thursdays at 5 p.m., Columbia.

Ben Leider—Highlights in the life of the newspaperman-aviator killed in Spain. Sun., Apr. 18, 8:30 p.m., WEVD, N. Y.

Recent Recommendations

MOVIES

Quality Street. A polite and charming version of James Barrie's whimsical play. Katherine Hepburn and Franchot Tone in the leading roles.

Maytime. Just in case you like this sort of thing. It features Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy, a potpourri of music, and much lavender and old lace.

Beethoven Concerto (Cameo, N.Y.). Amkino giving us pleasant entertainment featuring two musical child prodigies.

PLAYS

Young Madame Conti (Music Box, N.Y.). Constance Cummings performs brilliantly in Bruno Frank's story of *crime passionnel.*

Red Harvest (National, N.Y.). The raw stuff of life in a Red Cross war hospital.

Candida (Empire, N.Y.). Revival of Shaw's domestic-relations comedy, with Katharine Cornell.

Helen Howe. Monodramas in social satire, on tour: Apr. 21, College Club, Portland, Me.; Apr. 23, Watertown, Mass.; May 1, E. Northfield, Mass.

Power (Ritz, N.Y.). The Living Newspaper's powerful and amusing attack on the utilities racket.

Marching Song. (Bayes, N.Y.). Production of John Howard Lawson's powerful auto strike drama now taken over by the acting company.

Steel. (Labor Stage, N.Y.). John Wexley's play brought up to date, Fri. and Sat. evenings and Sat. matinées.

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LECTURE

HAROLD J. LASKI
will lecture on "The Future of Western Democracy" at the Roerich Museum, 310 Riverside Drive, New York City, on Monday evening, April 19, at 8:30 P. M. The meeting is sponsored by the New Masses. Tickets at 40c, 65c and $1 are now available at the **New Masses,** 31 East 27th Street, New York City.

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